



- 1 -

248143US2
Marked-Up Copy of
Substitute Specification

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

MERGE INFORMATION PROVIDER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention generally relates to merge information providers and more particularly to a merge information providing apparatus, an
5 information providing apparatus, a managing apparatus, a merge information providing method, an information providing method, a managing method, a merge information providing program, an information providing program, a managing program and a recording
10 medium storing such a merge information providing program, information providing program or managing program.

First, explanation will be made on a conventional example of certifying a user by
15 utilizing ~~a certification~~ an authentication provider and allowing the user to use a service provided by application software with reference to Figure 1, wherein it should be noted that Figure 1 is a diagram for explaining such an example of conducting
20 certification of a user and allowing the user to use a service provided by application software.

The system of Figure 1 is formed of a Web browser 1, a Web portal 2, an application 3 and ~~a~~
certification an authentication directory provider 4.

25 Here, the Web browser 1 is the software

that browses the Web pages.

The Web portal 2 is a Web site providing entrance of the Internet, and provides various Web services that can be used from the Web browser 1.

5 The application 3 is one of the services provided by the Web portal 2 to the Web browser 1.

The certification directory provider 4 is a provider providing certification of registered users and provides information, and the like, of the group
10 to which the user belongs.

In a step S1, the Web browser 1 transmits the log-in name and the password input by the user to the Web portal 2.

After the step S1, the process proceeds to
15 a next step S2, and the Web portal 2 transmits an issue request of ~~a certification~~ an authentication ticket, which contains the log-in name and password received in the step S1, to the certification directory provider 4 as will be explained later.

20 In the certification directory provider 4, examination is made whether or not the received log-in name and password agree with the correct combination of log-in name and password of the registered user based on the log-in name and password
25 contained in the received issue request of

certification ticket, and in the case it is determined that the combination is correct, a ~~certification~~ an authentication ticket certifying this is issued.

5 After the step S2, the process proceeds to a next step S3, and the certification directory provider 4 transmits an issue response of certification ticket including the ID of the issued certification ticket to the Web portal 2.

10 After the step S3, the process proceeds to a next step S4, and the Web portal 2 transmits the information indicating success of certification to the Web browser 1.

 After the step S4, the process proceeds to
15 a next step S5, and the Web browser 1 notifies that the user is going to use the resource provided by the application 3 to the Web portal 2.

 After the step S5, the process proceeds to
20 a next step S6, and the Web portal 2 transmits the issue request of a session ticket that includes the ID of the certification ticket acquired in the step S3 to the application 3 for getting permission to use the service.

 After the step S6, the process proceeds to
25 a next step S7, and the application 3 transmits an ID

confirmation request including the ID of the above-mentioned certification ticket to the directory provider 4 for the purpose of confirming that the issue request for the session ticket comes from a valid user permitted to use the application.

After the step S7, the process proceeds to a next step S8, and the certification directory provider 4 determines whether or not the ID of the given certification ticket is the ID of a valid certification ticket. In the case it was determined that the ID is the one of a valid certification ticket, the certification directory provider 4 transmits the ID confirmation response including the information of the user to whom the certification ticket has been issued to the application 3.

After the step S8, the process proceeds to a next step S9, and the application 3 issues the session ticket when it is judged that the issue request of the session ticket acquired in the step S6 is the request from the valid user permitted to use the application, based on the information of the user acquired in step S8. Thereby, an issue response of the session ticket containing the ID of the session ticket is transmitted to the Web portal 2.

After the step S9, the process proceeds to

a next step S10, and the Web portal 2 notifies to the Web browser 1 that the application of the service has been permitted.

After the step S10, the process proceeds to
5 a next step S11, and the Web browser 1 notifies to the Web portal 2 that the service provided by the application 3 is going to be used.

After the step S11, the process proceeds to
a next step S12, and the Web portal 2 transmits an
10 application request of the service including the ID of the session ticket acquired in the step S9 to the application 3.

After the step S12, the process proceeds to
a next step S13, and the application 3 determines the
15 validity of the ID of the session ticket contained in the application request of the service. In the event it is determined that the ID is the ID of a valid session ticket, the application 3 transmits the designated service to the Web portal 2.

20 After the step S13, the process proceeds to a next step S14, and the Web portal 2 provides the service received in the step S13 to the Web browser 1.

As explained with reference to Figure 1,
the certification directory provider 4 issues the
25 certification ticket that certifies the registered

user based on the user name and password in the issue request for the certification ticket received from the Web portal 2 and transmits the issue response of the certification ticket containing the ID of the
5 certification ticket to the Web portal 2. Further, the certification directory provider 4 transmits the confirmation response of the ID of the certification ticket containing the information of the user to the application 3 based on the ID of the certification
10 ticket included in the confirmation request of the ID of the certification ticket received from the application 3.

Generally the Web portal 2 provides plural Web services and thus supports plural applications
15 and plural certification providers certifying the user of the plural applications.

Figure 2 is a diagram explaining an example that one Web portal supports plural applications and plural certification directory providers.

20 The system of Figure 2 is formed of a Web browser 1, a Web portal 2, a Windows (trade mark) application 5, a Notes (trade mark) application 6, a Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7, and a Notes (trade mark) certification directory
25 provider 8.

In Figure 2, it can be seen that there exist, contrary to Figure 1, plural applications provided by the Web portal 2 and plural certification providers for certification of the user of the
5 applications.

By adopting the construction shown in Figure 2, a user is certified as the user of Windows (trade mark) in the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7 upon inputting of
10 the user name and password registered in the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7 to the Web browser 1, and the user can use the Windows (trade mark) application 5.

Also, when the user inputs the user name
15 and password of the user that is registered in Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8 to the Web browser 1, the user is certified as the user of Notes (trade mark) in the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8, and the user can
20 use the Notes (trade mark) application 6.

However, in the construction shown in Figure 2, it has been necessary to develop an access module 101 accessing the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7 and an access
25 module 102 accessing the Notes (trade mark)

certification directory provider 8 separately for the Web portal 2, and there has been a problem of poor efficiency.

To solve this problem, the construction as shown in Figure 3 is conceivable.

Figure 3 is a diagram explaining an example of integrating the access modules of a Web portal to a single module.

The system of Figure 3 is formed of a Web browser 1, a Web portal 2, a Windows (trade mark) application 5, a Notes (trade mark) application 6, a Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7, a Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8, and a provider 9.

In Figure 3, it can be seen that the provider 9 is provided in addition to the construction of Figure 2 for integrating the access modules of the Web portal 2 into a single module 10.

The provider 9 transmits the user name and the password acquired through the Web browser 1 and the Web portal 2 to the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7 and also to the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8 and requests the issuance of certification ticket to each of the providers 7 and 8.

The Provider 9 transmits the ID of the certification ticket to the Web portal 2 in the case the issue response of the certification ticket including the ID of the certification ticket is
5 received from any of the providers.

By using the construction as shown in Figure 3, it is possible to integrate the access modules access of the Web portal 2 into the single module 10.

10 However, in the construction shown in Figure 3, there arises a problem, when a new application is added to the Web portal 2, that it is necessary to distinguish the Windows (trade mark) user registered in the Windows (trade mark)
15 certification directory provider 7 from the Notes (trade mark) user registered in the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8 in the application thus added newly.

The example of adding a new application to
20 the construction of Figure 3 will be explained with reference to Figure 4.

Figure 4 is a diagram for explaining an example of adding a new application to the construction of Figure 3.

25 The system of Figure 4 is constructed by

the Web browser 1, the Web portal 2, the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7, the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8, the provider 9, and an application 11.

5 In Figure 4, it can be seen that an application 11 is added newly to the Web portal 2 in the construction of Figure 3 in place of the Windows (trade mark) application 5 and the Notes (trade mark) application 6.

10 In such a construction, there arises a problem, in the case the application 11 has authorized both of the Windows (trade mark) user certified by the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7 and the Notes (trade mark) user
15 certified by the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8, that the application 11 has to manage the two users by registering the respective user IDs for distinguishing the respective users, and managing becomes complicated.

20 Consider an example that the user of Notes (trade mark) and the user of Windows (trade mark) are the same person.

 In such a case, there has been a problem that it is necessary to manage the user ID of the
25 user using Windows (trade mark) and the user ID of

the user using Notes (trade mark) separately in the application 11, even when the user is using the same user ID for Notes (trade mark) and for Windows (trade mark).

5 On the other hand, it is also conceivable to introduce a Local certification directory provider 12 in addition to the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7 and the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8.

10 Figure 5 is a diagram for explaining the example of introducing such a Local certification directory provider.

 The system of Figure 5 is formed of the Web browser 1, the Web portal 2, the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7, the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8, the provider 9, the application 11 and a Local certification directory provider 12.

 As for Figure 5, it can be seen that the Local certification directory provider 12 is introduced additionally to the construction of Figure 4.

 As shown in Figure 5, users Kana, Kurose, Maeda, Aitoh, Ikegami, Rdhguest, are registered in the Windows (trade mark) certification directory

25

provider 7, while the users Kana, Kurose, Maeda, Aitoh, Ikegami are registered in the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8.

Further, the users Kana, Kurose, Maeda and
5 also group1 and group2 are registered in the newly introduced Local certification directory provider 12.

Hereinafter, an example of the group members registered in the Local certification directory provider 12 shown in Figure 5 will be
10 explained with reference to Figure 6.

Figure 6 is a diagram explaining the example of group members registered in the Local certification directory provider 12 shown in Figure 5.

As shown in Figure 6, the Local
15 certification directory provider 12 of Figure 5 holds the users and groups inside the provider as the group members.

However, even in the case such a Local provider 12 is introduced for holding the users and
20 groups inside the provider as the group members, there has been a problem in that the application 11 of Figure 5 has to manage the users, groups, and the like of the Local provider 12 and further the users and the groups of other providers separately.

25 Further, in the system explained with

reference to the conventional example, there arises a problem, when a user has requested certification by inputting the log-in name and password through the Web browser 1, in that the user information of the user registered to a provider other than the provider in which the certification has been made and/or the group information to which the user belongs, cannot be acquired.

Figure 7 is a diagram for explaining the problem of such a conventional provider.

Consider the case in which certification of a user has been made for the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7. It can be seen that, while the information of the user Kana or the information of the group to which Kana belongs and registered in the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7 may be acquired, the information of the user kana or the information of the group to which Kana belongs and registered in the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8 is not accessible.

Also, in the conventional example, explanation has been made about the certification directory provider in which both of the certification and providing of user information of a user and/or

the group information of the group to which the user belongs are conducted by the providers of Windows (trade mark), Notes (trade mark) and Local connected to the provider 9.

5 However, even in the case these providers are the directory provider that provides the user information of a user and/or the group information to of the groups which the user belongs, there has been a problem in that the user information of a user
10 and/or the group information of the user registered to a directory provider other than the permitted directory provider cannot be acquired based on the log-in name and password input by the user, similarly to the case noted above.

15 Also, in the conventional example, if the certification made with the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7, the user is certified as the user of Windows (trade mark), if the certification is made with the Notes (trade mark)
20 certification directory provider 8, the user is certified as the user of Notes (trade mark), and if the certification is made with the Local certification directory provider 12, the user is certified as the user of Local. Thus, there has been
25 a problem in that the user is distinguished depending

on the certification directory provider used for user certification even when the user is the same.

Also, while explanation has been made in the conventional example about the certification
5 directory provider in which both the certification and provision of user information of a user and/or the group information to which the user belongs by the providers of Windows (trade mark) and Notes (trade mark) and Local connected in provider 9, there
10 has been a problem in that the user information of the same user and/or the group information to which that user belongs and registered to a directory provider other than the permitted directory provider is inaccessible based on the log-in name and password
15 input by the user, even when these providers are the directory provider which provides user information and/or the group information to which the user belongs.

20 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, it is a general object of the present invention to provide a novel and useful merge information providing apparatus, information
providing apparatus, managing apparatus, merge
25 information providing method, information providing

method, managing method, merge information providing program, information providing program, managing program and also recording medium storing such a program wherein the foregoing problems are eliminated.

5 Another and more specific object of the present invention is to provide a merge information providing apparatus, information providing apparatus, managing apparatus, merge information providing method, information providing method, managing method,
10 merge information providing program, information providing program, managing program and also a recording medium, capable of acquiring not only the user information of a user and/or the group information of the groups to which the user belongs
15 and registered to the provider that has been certified or the use thereof is permitted but also the user information of the user and/or the group information of the groups to which the user belongs and registered to other, different providers.

20 Another object of the present invention is to provide a merge information providing apparatus having merge user information providing means, said merge user information providing means comprising plural user information providing means providing
25 information regarding a user as subordinate user

information providing means, said merge information providing apparatus acquiring information regarding said user from said user information providing means and providing said acquired information regarding to
5 said user with merging.

According to the present invention, it becomes possible to acquire the user information and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and registered to the provider not
10 only from the provider of which use is permitted but also from other providers.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a merge information providing apparatus having merge user information providing means, said
15 merge user information providing means comprising plural user information providing means providing information regarding said user and also a-
~~certification~~an authentication service regarding said user, wherein the merge information providing
20 apparatus acquires information regarding said user from said user information providing means and providing said acquired information regarding said user with merging.

According to the present invention, it
25 becomes possible to acquire the user information of

the user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs not only from the certified provider but also from other providers.

Another object of the present invention is
5 to provide an information providing apparatus having user information providing means providing information regarding a user, said user information providing means providing, in response to a request from a merge provider comprising said user
10 information providing means and other user information providing means as subordinate user information providing means, the information regarding a designated user to said merge user information providing means.

15 According to the present invention, it becomes possible to provide the information of the designated user and/or the group information of the group to which the designated user belongs.

Another object of the present invention is
20 to provide an information providing apparatus having user information providing means providing information regarding a user and ~~a certification~~ an authentication service regarding the user, said user information providing means comprising user
25 information providing means for providing the

information of a designated user in response to a request from a merge user information providing means comprising said user information providing means and other user information providing means to said merge
5 user information providing means.

According to the present invention, it becomes possible to provide the information of the designated user and/or the group information of the group to which the designated user belongs.

10 Also, the present invention has the feature of providing setup request transmission means for transmitting a request for setting the subordinate user information providing means to the merge information providing apparatus.

15 According to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, it becomes possible to change or add the setting of the subordinate user information providing means, by providing the setup request transmission means that transmits the request for
20 setting up the subordinate user information providing means to the merge information providing apparatus.

Also the present invention provides a merge information providing method, an information providing method, a managing method, a merge
25 information providing program, an information

providing program, a managing program and also a recording medium corresponding to the above-mentioned information providing apparatus.

For example, the first use permission
5 information corresponds to the session ticket 300 of the sub-provider 14 to be described later or a session ticket ID310 of the session ticket 300.

Further, the second use permission
10 information corresponds for example to a session ticket 200 of the Union merging provider 13 to be described later or a session ticket ID210 of session ticket 200.

Further, the first certification
information may corresponds to a ~~certification~~
15 authentication ticket 600 of the sub-provider 14 to be described later or a ~~certification~~
authentication ticket ID610 of the certification ticket 600.

Further, the second certification
20 information corresponds to a ~~certification~~
authentication ticket 500 of the Union merge provider 13 to be described later or a ~~certification~~
authentication ticket ID510 of the certification ticket 500.

25 Further, the user distinction information

corresponds to UID to be described later.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a merge information providing apparatus having merge user information providing means, said
5 merge user information providing means comprising plural user information providing means providing information regarding a user as subordinate user information providing means, wherein said merge information providing apparatus acquires the
10 information regarding a user registered to the user information providing means of which use is permitted and also the information of the same user registered to other user information providing means without distinguishing the user by whether or not the user of
15 the user information providing means is permitted, and provides the information thus acquired with merging.

According to the present invention, it becomes possible to acquire the user information of
20 the same user or the group information to which the user belongs without distinguishing the user by the sub provider of which use is permitted, for example from the sub providers different from the sub provider of which use is permitted.

25 Another object of the present invention is

to provide a merge information providing apparatus
having merge information providing means, said merge
information providing means comprising a plurality of
user information providing means providing
5 information regarding a user and also a
~~certification~~an authentication service of the user,
wherein the merge information providing apparatus
acquires the information of the user from the user
information providing means in which the user is
10 permitted and/or certification is made and also the
information for the same user registered to other
user information providing means without
distinguishing the user by whether or not the use of
the user information providing means is permitted or
15 the certification is made, and provide the
information thus acquired with merging.

According to the present invention, it
becomes possible to acquire the user information of a
particular user and or group information of the group
20 to which that user belongs not only from the sub
provider of which user is permitted or certification
is made but also from other sub providers.

Another object of the present invention is
to provide a merge user information providing means
25 having merge user information providing means, said

merge user information providing means comprising a
main user information providing means and sub
provider information provider means for providing
information regarding to a user and also a—
5 ~~certification~~ an authentication service for the user,
wherein the merge user information
providing means acquires the information of the user
registered to the user information providing means of
which use is permitted and/or the certification is
10 made and also the information of the same user
registered to other sub providers, without
distinguishing the user by whether or not the use of
the user information providing means is permitted or
the certification is made, and provides the
15 information regarding the user thus acquired with
merging.

According to the present invention,
acquires the information of the user registered to
the user information providing means of which use is
20 permitted and/or the certification is made and also
the information of the same user registered to other
sub providers, without distinguishing the user by
whether or not the use of the user information
providing means is permitted or the certification is
25 made.

Another object of the present invention is to provide an information providing apparatus having user information providing means for providing information regarding a user, said user information
5 providing means providing, in response to a request from merge user information providing means comprising said user information providing means and other user information providing means as subordinate user information providing means, the information
10 regarding the user corresponding to distinction information distinguishing the user registered to that user information providing means and/or other user information providing means, to said merge user information providing means.

15 According to the present invention, it becomes possible to provide the information regarding to the user corresponding to the distinction information to the merge user information providing means upon request.

20 Another object of the present invention is to provide an information providing apparatus having user information providing means providing information regarding a user and also the certification service regarding to said user, wherein
25 said user information providing means provides, in

response to a request from a merge user information
providing means comprising said user information
providing means and other user information providing
means as subordinate user information providing means,
5 the information of the user corresponding to
distinction information distinguishing the user
registered to that user information providing means
or other user information providing means, to the
merge user information providing means.

10 According to the present invention, it
becomes possible to provide the information regarding
the user corresponding to the distinction information
upon request.

In a preferred embodiment of the present
15 invention, there is provided setup request
transmission means transmitting the request regarding
the setup of the subordinate user information
providing means to the merge information providing
apparatus. With this, it becomes possible to add or
20 change the setting of the subordinate user
information providing means.

For example, the use permission information
corresponds to a session ticket 300 or a session
ticket ID310 of the session ticket 300 in a sub
25 provider 14 to be described later.

For example, the first certification
information corresponds to a ~~certification~~an
authentication ticket 600 in the main or sub provider
or a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket ID610 of
5 the certification ticket 600 as will be described
later.

Further, the second certification
information may correspond to a ~~certification~~an
authentication ticket 500 of a Join merging provider
10 13 or a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket ID510
of the certification ticket 500 as will be describe
later.

Further, the present invention can be
implemented in the form of a merge information
15 providing method, an information providing method, a
managing method, a merge information providing
program, an information providing program, a managing
program and also a recording medium storing such a
program.

20

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a diagram explaining an example
of using a service provided by an application by
conducting certification of the user by utilizing a
25 ~~certification~~an authentication provider;

Figure 2 is a diagram for explaining an example in which a single Web portal supports plural applications and plural certification directory providers;

5 Figure 3 is a diagram explaining an example of integrating access modules of a Web portal into a single module;

 Figure 4 is a diagram for explaining an example of adding a new application to the
10 construction of Figure 3;

 Figure 5 is a diagram explaining an example of introducing a Local certification directory provider;

 Figure 6 is a diagram showing an example of
15 the members of a group registered in the Local certification directory provider 12 shown in Figure 5;

 Figure 7 is a diagram explaining the problem of a conventional provider;

20 Figure 8 is a diagram explaining an example of introducing a Union merge provider according to the present invention;

 Figure 9 is a diagram explaining an example of the members of the group of the Local
25 certification directory provider shown in Figure 8;

Figures 10A and 10B are diagrams explaining the structure of a user ID of the Local certification directory provider shown in Figure 8;

Figure 11 is a diagram showing the
5 construction a fusion machine according to an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 12 is a diagram showing the hardware construction of the fusion machine according to an embodiment of the present invention;

10 Figure 13 is a diagram for explaining the construction of a UCS;

Figure 14 is another diagram for explaining the construction of UCS;

15 Figure 15 is another diagram for explaining the construction of the UCS;

Figure 16 is a functional block diagram of the Union merge provider and the sub provider according to a first embodiment of the present invention;

20 Figure 17 is a concept diagram showing the structure of the session ticket of the Union merge provider;

Figures 18A and 18B are diagrams explaining an example of modification of the data of directory
25 operation wrapper;

Figure 19 is a flowchart showing an example of acquisition processing of a group to which the user belongs conducted in a Union merge provider;

Figure 20 is a flowchart showing an example
5 of the acquisition process of a group to which the user belongs conducted in a sub provider;

Figure 21 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message the group acquisition request transmitted from a client to the Union merge
10 provider;

Figures 22A - 22C are diagrams showing examples of the XML message of a group acquisition request transmitted from the Union merge provider to a sub provider;

15 Figures 23A - 23C are diagrams showing an example of the XML message of a group acquisition response transmitted to the Union merge provider from the sub provider;

Figure 24 is a diagram showing an example
20 of the XML message of a group acquisition response transmitted from the Union merge provider to the client;

Figure 25 is a functional block diagram of a Union merge provider and a sub provider according
25 to a second embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 26 is a concept diagram for explaining the structure of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket of a Union merge provider;

Figure 27 is a flowchart showing an example
5 of issuing the certification ticket in the Union merge provider;

Figure 28 is a flowchart showing an example of issuing the certification ticket in the sub provider;

10 Figure 29 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket issue request transmitted from a client to the Union merge provider;

Figure 30 is a diagram showing an example
15 of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket issue request transmitted from the Union merge provider to the sub provider;

Figure 31 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication
20 authentication ticket issue response transmitted to the Union merge provider from the sub provider;

Figure 32 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication
authentication ticket issue response transmitted from
25 the Union merge provider to the client;

Figure 33 is a flowchart showing an example of the certification ticket ID confirmation process conducted in the Union merge provider;

Figure 34 is a flowchart showing an example
5 of the certification ticket ID confirmation process conducted in the sub provider;

Figure 35 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket ID confirmation request
10 transmitted from the client to the Union merge provider;

Figure 36 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket ID confirmation request
15 transmitted from the Union merge provider to the sub provider;

Figure 37 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket ID confirmation response
20 transmitted to the Union merge provider from the sub provider;

Figure 38 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket ID confirmation response
25 transmitted from the Union merge provider to the

client;

Figure 39 is a diagram showing an example of acquiring a document stored in a repository service by conducting the certification of a user by
5 utilizing the Union merge provider;

Figure 40 is a diagram for explaining an example of integrating Union merge providers existing in plural numbers;

Figure 41 is another diagram for explaining
10 the construction of an UCS;

Figure 42 is a diagram for explaining an the example of the sequence for acquiring a provider list;

Figure 43 is a diagram showing an example
15 of the XML message of the provider list acquisition request transmitted from the client to the dispatcher;

Figure 44 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a provider list acquisition
20 response transmitted from the dispatcher to the client;

Figure 45 is a diagram for explaining an example of the sequence for adding a sub provider;

Figure 46 is a diagram showing an example
25 of the XML message of a sub provider addition request

transmitted from the client to the dispatcher;

Figure 47 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a sub provider addition response transmitted from the dispatcher to the
5 client;

Figure 48 is a diagram showing the hardware construction of a client;

Figure 49 is a functional block diagram of the client;

10 Figures 50A - 50C are diagrams showing an example of the GUI for setting the provider in the client;

Figure 51 is another diagram showing an example of the GUI for setting the provider in the
15 client;

Figure 52 is another diagram showing an example of the GUI for setting of the provider in the client;

Figure 53 is another diagram showing an
20 example of the GUI for setting of the provider in the client;

Figure 54 is a diagram explaining an example of remote provider;

Figure 55 is a diagram explaining an
25 example of the processing of a remote provider;

Figure 56 is a diagram showing an example of introducing a join merge provider according to the present invention;

Figure 57 is a diagram for explaining an
5 example of the group members registered to the Local certification directory provider shown in Figure 56;

Figures 58A and 58B are diagrams for explaining an example of the structure of the user ID of the Local certification directory provider shown
10 in Figure 56;

Figure 59 is a diagram showing the construction of a fusion machine according to an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 60 is a diagram showing the hardware
15 construction of the fusion machine according to an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 61 is a diagram for explaining the construction of an UCS;

Figure 62 is another diagram for explaining
20 the construction of an UCS;

Figure 63 is another diagram for explaining the construction of an UCS;

Figure 64 is a functional block diagram of a join merge provider and a sub provider according to
25 a third embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 65 is a concept diagram explaining the structure of the session ticket of the join merge provider;

Figures 66A and 66B are diagrams for
5 explaining an example of modification of the data of the directory operation wrapper;

Figure 67 is a flowchart of an example of the group acquisition process conducted in the join merge provider;

10 Figure 68 is a flowchart showing an example of the group acquisition process conducted in the sub provider;

Figure 69 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a group acquisition request
15 transmitted from the client to the join merge provider;

Figures 70A - 70C are diagrams showing examples of the XML message of a group acquisition request transmitted to the Local directory provider,
20 which is one of the sub providers, from the join merge provider;

Figure 71A - 71C are diagrams showing examples of the XML message of a group acquisition request transmitted to the WinNT4 directory provider,
25 which is one of the sub providers, from the join

merge provider;

Figures 72A - 72C are diagrams showing examples of the XML message of a group acquisition request transmitted to the Notes (trade mark) R5
5 directory provider, which is one of the sub providers, from the join merge provider;

Figures 73A - 73C are diagrams showing examples of the XML message of a group acquisition response transmitted to the join merge provider from
10 the Local directory provider, which is one of the sub providers;

Figures 74A - 74C are diagrams showing examples of the XML message of a group acquisition response transmitted to the join merge provider from
15 the WinNT4 directory provider, which is one of the sub providers;

Figures 75A - 75C are diagrams showing examples of the XML message of a group acquisition response transmitted to the join merge provider from
20 the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider, which is one of the sub providers;

Figure 76 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a group acquisition response transmitted from the join merge provider to the
25 client;

Figure 77 is a functional block diagram of the join merge provider and the sub provider according to a fourth embodiment of the present invention;

5 Figure 78 is a concept diagram for explaining the structure of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket of the join merge provider;

Figure 79 is a concept diagram showing the data managed in the integrated directory;

10 Figure 80 is a flowchart showing an example of certification ticket issue process conducted in the join merge provider;

Figure 81 is a flowchart showing an example of certification ticket issue process in the sub
15 provider;

Figure 82 is a flowchart showing an example of the certification ticket ID confirmation process in the sub provider;

Figure 83 is a diagram showing an example
20 of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket issue request transmitted from the client to the join merge provider;

Figure 84 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication
25 authentication ticket issue request transmitted from

the join merge provider to the sub provider;

Figure 85 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket issue response transmitted to
5 the join merge provider from the sub-sub provider;

Figure 86 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket ID confirmation request transmitted from the join merge provider to the sub-
10 sub provider;

Figure 87 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket ID confirmation response transmitted to the join merge provider from the sub-
15 sub provider;

Figure 88 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket issue request transmitted from a join merge provider to the main sub provider;

20 Figure 89 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket issue response transmitted to the join merge provider from the main sub provider;

Figure 90 is a diagram showing an example
25 of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication

authentication ticket issue response transmitted from the join merge provider to the client;

Figure 91 is a flowchart showing an example of the certification ticket ID confirmation process
5 in the join merge provider;

Figure 92 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an
authentication ticket ID confirmation request transmitted from the client to the join merge
10 provider;

Figure 93 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an
authentication ticket ID confirmation request from the join merge provider to the main sub provider;

15 Figure 94 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an
authentication ticket ID confirmation response transmitted to the join merge provider from the main sub provider;

20 Figure 95 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an
authentication ticket ID confirmation response from the join merge provider to the client;

Figure 96 is another concept diagram of
25 data managed in the integrated directory;

Figure 97 is a diagram for explaining an example of conducting certification of the user by reading an IC card by utilizing the join merge provider and acquiring a document accumulated in the repository service;

Figure 98 is another diagram for explaining the construction of the UCS;

Figure 99 is a diagram for explaining an example of the provider list acquisition sequence;

Figure 100 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a provider list acquisition request from the client to dispatcher;

Figure 101 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a provider list acquisition response from the dispatcher to the client;

Figure 102 is a diagram for explaining an example of the sub provider addition sequence;

Figure 103 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a sub provider addition request from the client to the dispatcher;

Figure 104 is a diagram showing an example of the XML message of a sub provider addition response from the dispatcher to the client;

Figure 105 is a diagram showing an example of the hardware construction of the client;

Figure 106 is a functional block diagram of the client;

Figures 107A - 107C are diagrams showing an example of the GUI for setting provider in the
5 client;

Figure 108 is a diagram showing an example of the GUI for setting provider in the client;

Figure 109 is a diagram showing an example of the GUI for setting provider in the client;

10 Figure 110 is a diagram showing an example of the GUI for setting provider in the client;

Figure 111 is a diagram explaining an the example of the remote provider;

Figure 112 is a diagram for explaining an
15 example of the process regarding the remote provider.

Figure 113 is a diagram for explaining the construction of the UCS;

Figure 114 is a diagram explaining an example of the property addition sequence;

20 Figure 115 is a diagram explaining an example of the property acquisition sequence;

Figure 116 is a diagram showing an example of the property acquisition request;

Figure 117 is a diagram showing an example
25 of the property acquisition response;

Figure 118 is a diagram explaining an example of the property updating sequence;

Figure 119 is a diagram explaining an example of the property elimination sequence;

5 Figures 120A and 120B are diagrams showing examples of GUI in the client for the case in which the idJoin merge provider is applied to a fusion machine.

10 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS
[FIRST EMBODIMENT]

Figure 8 is a diagram for explaining an example of introducing a Union merge provider according to the present invention.

15 The system of Figure 8 includes the Web browser 1, the Web portal 2, the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7, the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8, the application 11, the Local certification directory
20 provider 12, and further a Union merge provider 13.

Thus, in Figure 8, it can be seen that the Union merge provider 13 is introduced newly in place of the provider 9 explained with reference to Figure 5 in relation to the conventional technology.

25 The Union merge provider 13 of the present

invention can acquire the user information of a user and/or the group information to which the user belongs and registered even from a sub provider different from the sub provider of which use is permitted based on the log-in name and password input by the user as will be explained later, provided that the provider to be managed (referred to below as sub provider) is the provider providing the registered user information of a user and/or the group information to which the user belongs.

Further, the Union merge provider 13 can acquire the user information of a user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and registered to a sub provider other than the sub provider of which use is certified based on the log-in name and password input by the user also in the case the connected sub provider is a provider that provides the registered user information of a user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and simultaneously a provider providing the certification service regarding the users.

In the example of Figure 8, the sub provider may be any of the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7, the Local

certification directory provider 12, or the Notes
(trade mark) certification directory provider 8.

Hereinafter, explanation will be made on
the example of group members registered in the Local
5 certification directory provider 12 shown in Figure 8
with reference to Figure 9, wherein Figure 9 is a
diagram for explaining the example of the group
members registered to the Local certification
directory provider shown in Figure 8.

10 As shown in Figure 9, the Local
certification directory provider 12 of Figure 8 holds
the users and the groups of other providers as the
member of the group of Local certification directory
provider 12.

15 Thus, the group 1 of the Local
certification directory provider 12 shown in Figure 8
has the user Kana of the Windows (trade mark)
certification directory provider 7, the user Maeda of
the Windows (trade mark) certification directory
20 provider 7 and the user Kana of the Notes (trade
mark) certification directory provider 8, as the
members.

Also, the Local certification directory
provider 12 shown in Figure 8 holds the user
25 information, and the like, of other providers, in the

form of user ID.

Hereinafter, an example of the structure of the user ID of the Local certification directory provider 12 shown in Figure 8 will be explained with
5 reference to Figure 10, wherein Figure 10 is a diagram for explaining the example of the structure of the user ID of the Local certification directory provider shown in Figure 8.

As shown in Figure 10A, the user ID of the
10 Local certification directory provider 12 of Figure 8 contains the ID type, the identifier of the provider that has made the certification, and the identifier of the user in the provider that has made the certification.

15 For example, the ID type represents whether it is the user or the group, while the identifier of the provider has made the certification represents whether it is a Windows (trade mark) provider or a Notes (trade mark) provider, or the like. Further,
20 the identifier of the user in the provider that has made the certification represents individual users such as Kana, Kurose, Maeda, and the like.

Figure 10B is an example of the user ID of Figure 10A.

25 Referring to Figure 10B, the Local

certification directory provider 12 can register the users of the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7 and the users of the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8 in
5 the distinguished state by holding the user ID shown in Figure 10B.

By introducing the Local provider 12 holding the user ID as such, the application 11 of Figure 8 can integrate the users without managing the
10 users of different providers separately, by using the user ID of the Local provider 12.

Therefore, the user can use the application 11 irrespective of whether the user is certified by the Windows (trade mark) certification directory
15 provider 7 or by the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8.

Hereinafter, an example of the apparatus mounted with the Union merge provider 13 and/or the sub providers shown in Figure 8 will be explained
20 with reference to Figure 11.

Figure 11 shows the construction of a fusion machine 120 according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Referring to Figure 11, the fusion machine
25 120 includes a black-and-white line printer 15 and a

color line printer 16, a hardware resource 17 such as a scanner and facsimile, a software group 20, and a fusion machine starter 50. The software group 20 is formed of an application 30 and a platform 40.

5 The platform 40 is constructed so as to include a control service that interprets a process request from the application 30 and issues an acquisition request of hardware resources, a system resource manager 43 (referred to hereinafter as with
10 SRM) arbitrating the acquisition requests from the control services by managing one or more hardware resources, and an operating system 41 (referred to hereinafter as OS).

 The control service is constructed so as to
15 have one or more service modules such as a system control service (Referred to hereinafter as SCS) 42, an engine control service (Referred to hereinafter as ECS) 44, a memory control service (referred to hereinafter as MCS) 45, an operation panel control
20 service (referred to hereinafter as OCS) 46, a Fax control service (referred to hereinafter as FCS) 47, a network control service (referred to hereinafter as NCS) 48, a user information managing service (referred to hereinafter as UCS) 49, and the like.

25 Here, the platform 40 is constructed to

include an application program interface (referred to hereinafter as API) that enables reception of the process demand from the application 30 by a predefined function.

5 The OS 41 is an operating system such as UNIX (trade mark) and conducts parallel processing of each of the software in the platform 40 or the application 30 in parallel.

 The process of SRM 43 carries out the
10 system control and also the control of the resources together with the SCS 42. For example, the process of SRM43 arbitrates and control the execution in accordance with the request form an upper layer that uses hardware resources such as the engine, which may
15 be a scanner part or a printer part, a memory, a hard disk device (HDD) file, a host I/O (Centronix interface), a network interface, an IEEE1394 interface, an RS 232C interface, and the like.

 For example, the SRM 43 determines whether
20 or not the requested hardware resources is available (not used by other requests), and if it is available, a notification is made to the upper layer that the requested hardware resources are available. Further, the SRM 43 carries out scheduling of using the
25 hardware resources in response to the request from

the upper class layer. For example, the SRM 43
executes the requests such as paper feeding and
picture formation conducted of the printer engine,
memory securing, file generation, and the like,
5 directly.

The process of SCS42 executes the
application managing such as application control,
operation part control, system screen display, LED
display, resource managing and an interrupt
10 application control. The process of ECS 44 executes
the engine control of the black-and-white line
printer 15, color line printer 16, and the hardware
resource 17.

The process of MCS 45 executes acquisition and
15 release of the image memory, the use of the hard disk
devices (HDD), and compression and decompression of
image data, and the like. The process of OCS 46
executes control of the operation panel used for the
information transmission means between the operator
20 and the main body control.

The process of FCS 47 provides the
application for executing: facsimile transmission and
reception that uses a PSTN or ISDN network from each
of the application layers of the system controller,
25 registration/quotation of various facsimile data

managed by the BKM (backup SRAM), reading of facsimile, reception and printing of facsimile, fusion transmission and reception, and the like.

The process of NCS 48 provides the services
5 that we used commonly to the applications that require a network I/O and distribute the data received from the network side by respective protocols to respective applications or provide mediation at the time of transmitting the data from
10 the application to the side of the network.

The UCS 49 manages the user information of the user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belong and determines another device connected thereto via a storage device and/or a
15 network and storing therein the user information corresponding to the request and/or the Group information of the group to which the user belongs. Thereby, the UCS 49 acquires the user information of the user and/or the group information of the group to
20 which the user belongs from the foregoing another device connected via the storage device and/or the network thus determined and supplies the same to each of the applications.

Further, the process of the UCS 49 provides
25 ~~a certification~~ an authentication service of users, in

addition to the managing of the user information of the user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs.

The Union merge provider 13 and/or the
5 other sub providers explained with reference to Figure 8 (such as the Local certification directory provider 12, for example,) are mounted on the UCS 49.

The application 30 carries out processing pertinent to the user service related to image
10 formation processing, such as printer, copier, facsimile, scanner, and the like. The application 30 includes a printer application 31, which is an application for the printer having a page description language (PDL, PCL) and postscript (PS) a copy
15 application 32 for copiers, a fax application 33 for facsimiles, a scanner application 34 for scanners, a net file application 35 for network files and a process inspection application 36 for process inspection, and the like.

20 The fusion machine starter 50 is the part first executed upon power on of the fusion machine 120 activates the applications 30 or the platform 40. For example, the fusion machine starter 50 reads out the control service or application program from the
25 flash memory as will be described later and transfers

the programs thus read out to a memory region that secured on an SRAM or an SDRAM for system activation.

Figure 12 shows the hardware construction of a fusion machine according to the present
5 invention.

Referring to Figure 12, the fusion machine 120 of Figure 12 is constructed so as to include a controller board 60, an operation panel 70, a fax control unit 80 (referred to hereinafter as FCU), a
10 USB device 90, an IEEE1394 device 100, a driver I/F 101, and an engine part 110.

Here, the driver I/F101 is and I/F (interface) used for reading the programs, and the like, corresponding to the Union merge provider 13
15 and/or the sub provider 14 from an inserted recording medium storing the programs, and the like, corresponding to the Union merge provider 13 and/or the sub provider 14 and for loading to the fusion machine 120. Here, the recording medium may be any of
20 an SD memory card, smart media, a multimedia card, a CompactFlash (trade mark) medium, and the like.

The operation panel 70 is connected to an ASIC62 of the controller board 60 directly. Further, the FCU 80, the USB device 90, the IEEE1394 device
25 100, the driver I/F 101 and the engine part 110 are

connected to the ASIC 62 of the controller board 60 with a PCI bus (Peripheral Component Interconnect bus), and the like.

The controller board 60 is constructed so
5 as to include a CPU 61, the ASIC62, an SRAM (Static RAM) 63, an SDRAM (Synchronous DRAM) 64, a flash memory 65, and a HDD66. Thereby, the controller board 60 is constructed so as to connect the CPU 61, the SRAM63, the SDRAM64, the flash memory 65, the HDD66,
10 and the like. to the ASIC62.

It should be noted that the CPU61 carries out overall control of the fusion machine 120. Thus, the CPU61 activates the process of the SCS 42, the SRM 43, the ECS44, the MCS45, the OCS 46, the FCS 47
15 and also the NCS48 that form the platform 40 on the OS 41 and activates the printer application 31, the copy application 32, the fax application 33, the scanner application 34, the net file application 35 and also the process inspection application 36 that
20 constitute the application 30.

The ASIC 62 is an IC for image processing and includes a hardware element for image processing. Further, a virtual memory region such as kernel and process are mapped in the physical memory region of
25 the SRAM 63 and the SDRAM 64.

Hereinafter, a construction example of the UCS 49 will be explained with reference to Figures 13 - 15.

Figure 13 is a diagram for explaining the
5 construction of the UCS.

As shown in Figure 13, the UCS 49 is formed of the Union merge provider 13 shown in Figure 8 and one or more sub providers 14.

By adopting the construction of Figure 13,
10 the UCS49 integrates the user information of the user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs provided by the sub providers 14 in the Union merge provider 13, as will be described later. Thereby, it becomes possible to provide the
15 user information of a user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs to the applications 30, and the like, of the fusion machine 120 in the merged state.

Figure 14 is another diagram for explaining
20 the construction of the UCS.

As shown in Figure 14, the UCS 49 does not include the sub providers 14 and is formed of the Union merge provider 13 of Figure 8 only.

By taking the construction of Figure 14, it
25 becomes possible to merge the user information of a

user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and provided the sub provider 14 mounted to other device is merged in the Union merge provider 13. Thus, it becomes possible to
5 provide the user information of a user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs to the applications 30, and the like, of the fusion machine 120 in the merged state.

Figure 15 is another diagram for explaining
10 the construction of the UCS.

As shown in Figure 15, the UCS49 does not include the Union merge provider 13 of Figure 8 and is formed of at least one sub provider 14.

By adopting the construction of Figure 15,
15 it becomes possible to provide the user information of a user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs in response to a request from the Union merge provider 13 mounted to other device.

20 In the following, explanation will be made by using the Union merge provider 13 and the sub provider 14 for simplification of the explanation.

[EXAMPLE 1]

25 Figure 16 is a functional block diagram of

a Union merge provider and sub providers according to a Example 1 of a present invention.

In the first embodiment, for the sake of simplification of the explanation, it is assumed that
5 the Union merge provider 13 and the sub providers 14 provide the user information of a user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs, but not the certification of the users.

As shown in Figure 16 the Union merge
10 provider 13 is formed of a provider I/F 130, a merge processing part 133, a sub provider calling part 134, a Merge provider XML processing part 135, a sub provider registration part 136, and a session managing department 137.

15 Also, the provider I/F 130 is formed of an XML processing part 131 and a UID conversion part 132.

The Provider I/F 130 is an interface that connects the Union merge provider 13 to other providers and/or other applications. As will be
20 explained later, the sub provider 14, too, has a similar provider I/F 130.

The XML processing part 131 analyzes the XML message transmitted from other applications or Web portals, and the like, and converts the same to a
25 form usable by the programs in the Union merge

provider 13.

Conversely, the XML processing part 131 creates an XML message from the data, and the like, given from the UID conversion part 132 and transmits
5 the same to the applications, Web portals, and the like.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the applications and the Web portals may be the application 30 explained with reference to Figure 11,
10 or alternatively an applications of other fusion machine or other device connected to the fusion machine 120 via a network.

The UID conversion part 132 converts the user ID that is contained to the XML message
15 (referred to hereinafter as UID) according to the needs.

In the case the UID contained in the XML message has the construction of U: Windows (trade mark): Kana as explained with reference to Figure 10
20 of conventional technology and the construction of UID inside the provider is kana, for example, the UID conversion part 132 converts UID from U: Windows: Kana to Kana. Similarly, in the case the XML message is transmitted from the provider a conversion of UID
25 from Kana to U: Windows (trade mark): kana may be

conducted according to the needs.

Further, the merge processing part 133 merges the user information of a user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and registered to the sub providers 14 as will be described later.

The sub provider calling part 134 forwards the data necessary to create the XML message transmitted to the sub provider 14 to the merge provider XML processing part 135 to be described later.

Further, the sub provider calling part 134 forwards the user information of a user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and acquired from the sub provider 14 through the merge provider XML processing part 135 to be described later, to the merge processing part 133.

The merge provider XML processing part 135 creates the XML message on the basis of the data given from the sub provider calling part 134 and transmits the same to a designated sub provider 14.

Further, the merge provider XML processing part 135 receives the XML message transmitted from the sub provider 14 forwards the data contained in the XML message to the sub provider calling part 134.

It should be noted that the data about the sub provider 14 to be managed is registered in the sub provider registration part 136. In the sub provider registration part 136, the identifier of the sub provider 14, the name of the sub provider 14, the managing ID of the sub provider 14, the managing password of the sub provider 14, and the like are registered for each of the sub providers 14.

In the case of registering a new sub provider 14 to the Union merge provider 13, for example, the identifier of the sub provider 14, the name of the sub provider 14, the managing ID of the sub provider 14 and the managing password of the sub provider 14 are registered to the sub provider registration part 136.

The session managing part 137 manages the sessions between the Union merge provider 13 and other sub providers 14 as well as other applications or the Web portal.

For example, analysis is made whether or not the XML message acquired in the XML processing part 131 included the session ticket ID 210 of the valid session ticket 200, which permits the use of the union provider 13.

Further, the session managing part 137

acquires the session ticket ID 310 of the anonymous session ticket 300 from the sub provider 14 by using the managing ID and the managing password of the sub provider 14 registered in the sub provider registration part 136.

Thereby, the session managing part 137 issues the session ticket 200 of the Union merge provider 13 to be described later by using the session ticket ID310, and the like, of the acquired sub provider 14.

Because the session managing part 137 can acquire a session ticket ID 310 of an anonymous session ticket 300 from the sub provider 14, which is a provider different from the sub provider 14 to which the user has requested the issuance of the session ticket 400 by using the UID and the password, for example, the Union merge provider 13 can acquire the user information of a user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs from all the sub providers 14 under managing.

Figure 17 is a concept diagram for explaining the structure of the session ticket of the Union merge provider.

As shown in Figure 17, the session ticket 200 of the Union merge provider 13 has the structure

including the session ticket ID 210, the provider type, the provider name for public release, one or more sub provider names, the session ticket 300 of one or more sub providers and/or a session ticket 400.

5 Here, the session ticket ID 210 is the identifier that distinguishes the current session ticket, while the provider type is the type of the providers, which may be " Union Merge", and the like.

 The public released provider name is the
10 name of the public released Union merge provider 13, which may be "Union Merge 1".

 The sub provider name is the names of one or more registered sub providers 14. It should be noted that the session ticket 300 and/or the session
15 ticket 400 of the foregoing one or more registered sub providers 14 and the Union merge provider 13 are stored in the session ticket of the sub provider.

 Further, the session ticket 400 is the session ticket of the sub provider 14 issued based on
20 the UID and the password input by the user, while the session ticket 300 is the session ticket of the sub provider 14 issued based on the managing ID and the managing password under authority of the manager and stored in the sub provider registration part 136.

25 In the description hereinafter, it is

assumed for the sake of simplicity of explanation that the anonymous session ticket 300 is the only session ticket of the sub provider 14 contained in the session ticket 200 of the Union merge provider 13.

5 By providing the hierarchical structure shown in Figure 17, the sub provider 14 can become the Union merge provider 13.

 Further, while explanation has been made in Figure 17 by using the example in which the session
10 ticket 300 and/or the session ticket 400 for the one or more registered sub providers 14 and the Union merge provider 13 are stored in the session ticket of the sub provider, it is also possible that the session ticket 300 and/or the session ticket 400 are
15 stored in the decoded form.

 The sub provider 14 of Figure 16 is formed of a provider I/F 130, a directory operation wrapper 141 and a session managing part 142.

 The directory operation wrapper 141
20 modifies the data inside the sub provider 14 into the data capable of manipulating the user information held in the user information saving part 152 of the directory 150 or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and held in the group
25 information saving part 153, and acquires the user

information or the group information of the group to which the user belongs from the directory 150.

Further, it converts the acquired user information or the group information into the data
5 possible to be processed inside the sub provider 14.

An example of modification of the data of the directory operation wrapper 141 will be explained later by using Figure 18.

The session managing part 142 manages the
10 sessions between the sub providers 14 and the Union merge provider 13.

For example, it analyzes whether or not session ticket ID 310 of the valid session ticket 300 that permits the use of the sub provider 14 is
15 included in the XML message acquired in the XML processing part 131.

Further, the session managing part 142 issued the anonymous session ticket 300 when it receives the issue request of the anonymous session
20 ticket 300 that contains the managing ID and the managing password from the Union merge provider 13 via the provider I/F 130.

Further, the session managing part 142 gives the session ticket ID 310 of the anonymous
25 session ticket 300 thus issued to the provider I/F

130, and transmits the issue response of the anonymous session ticket 300 including the session ticket ID 310 to the Union merge provider 13.

Further, the directory 150 of Figure 16
5 contains the user information saving part 152 and the group information saving part 153.

The user information saving part 152 holds the user information of the user registered in the sub provider 14. For example, the UID, the user name,
10 the user password, and the like, are held in the user information saving part 152.

Further, the group information registered to the sub provider 14 is held in the group information saving part 153. For example, the group
15 information saving part 153 holds the group ID, the group name, the membership of the group, and the like.

Figures 18A and 18B are diagrams explaining modification of data in the directory operation wrapper.

20 Figure 18A is an example of modifying the data inside the sub provider 14 to the data capable of manipulating the user information held in the user information saving part 152 and the group information of the group to which the user belongs and held in
25 the information saving part 153 of the directory 150.

Figure 18B is an example of modifying the date of the user information held in the user information saving part 152 of the directory 150 or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and held in the group information saving part 153 to the data capable of processing in the sub provider 14.

Figure 19 is a flowchart showing an example of the acquisition processing of the group to which the user belongs in the Union merge provider.

In the following, the application or Web portal that transmits the acquisition request of the group information for the group to which the user belongs to the Union merge provider 13 will be referred to as simply the client for the sake of simplicity of explanation.

In the step S20, the XML processing part 131 of the Union merge provider 13 receives the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs from the client.

The example of the group acquisition request from the client to the Union merge provider 13 will be describes later with reference to Figure 21.

After the step S20, the process proceeds to

the step S21, and the session managing part 137
determines whether or not the session ticket ID 210
of the session ticket 200 of the Union merge provider
13 contained in the acquisition request of the group
5 to which the user belongs and received in the step
S20, is a valid session ticket ID 210.

When it is determined that the session
ticket is the session ticket ID210 of the valid
session ticket 200 ((YES in step S21), the process
10 proceeds to the step S22, while when it is determined
that the session ticket is the session ticket ID 210
of an invalid session ticket 200 (NO in step S21),
the process proceeds to the step S26.

In the step S22, the session managing part
15 137 forwards the session ticket ID310 of the session
ticket 300 of all the sub providers 14 contained in
the session ticket 200 of the Union merge provider 13
and the sub provider name to the sub provider calling
part 134.

20 After the step S22, the process advances to
the step S23, and the merge provider XML processing
part 135 issues the acquisition request of the group
to which the user belongs, to each of the sub
providers 14 including the session ticket ID 310 of
25 the session ticket 300 of the sub providers 14

acquired through the sub provider calling part 134,
and transmits the same to each of the sub providers
14.

The example of the group acquisition
5 request from the Union merge provider 13 to each of
the sub providers 14 will be described later with
reference to Figure 22.

After the step S23, the process proceeds to
the step S24 and the sub provider calling part 134
10 receives the assignment group acquisition response
responding to the acquisition request of the groups
to which the user belongs, from each of the sub
providers 14 via the merge provider XML processing
part 135.

15 The example of the group acquisition
response from the sub providers 14 to the Union merge
provider 13 will be described later with reference to
Figure 23.

After the step S24, the process proceeds to
20 the step S25, and the sub provider calling part 134
determines whether or not the group information of
the groups to which the designated user belongs is
included in the assignment group acquisition
responses from the sub providers 14 that have
25 received the response in the step S24.

When it is determined that even one piece of assignment group information of the user is contained (YES in step S25), the process proceeds to the step S27, while when it is determined that there
5 is not even one group to which the user belongs is contained (NO in step S25), the process proceeds to the step S26.

In the step S26, the XML processing part 131 of the Union merge provider 13 issues a response
10 indicating that the acquisition of the groups to which the user belongs has failed, and transmits the same to the client.

In the step S27, the merge processing part 133 merges the groups to which the user belongs and
15 included to the assignment group acquisition response acquired in the step S24 from each of the sub providers 14.

After the step S27, the process proceeds to the step S28, the XML processing part 131 of the
20 Union merge provider 13 issues the assignment group acquisition response including the information of the groups to which the user belongs and merged in the step S27, and transmits the same to the client.

The example of the group acquisition
25 response from the Union merge provider 13 to the

client will be described later with reference to Figure 24.

Figure 20 is a flowchart showing the example of the group acquisition process of the group to which the user belongs conducted in a sub provider.

The sub provider 14 starts the processing of the steps starting from step S30 as will be described below, when the Union merge provider 13 has transmitted the acquisition request of the groups to which the user belongs to each of the sub providers 14 in the step S23 of Figure 19.

In the step S30, the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 receives the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs from the Union merge provider 13.

The example of the group acquisition request from the Union merge provider 13 to each of the sub providers 14 will be described later with reference to Figure 22.

Following the step S30, the process proceeds to the step S31, and the UID conversion part 132 of the sub provider 14 converts the UID included in the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and received in the step S30 into the UID peculiar to the directory 150.

Following the step S31, the process advances to the step S32, and the session managing part 142 determines whether or not the session ticket ID310 of the session ticket 300 of sub provider 14
5 included in the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and received in the step S30 is the session ticket ID 310 of a valid session ticket 300.

When it is determined that the session
10 ticket ID 310 is a valid session ticket 300 (YES in step S32), the process proceeds to the step S34, while when it is determined the session ticket ID 310 is an invalid session ticket 300 (NO in step S32), the process proceeds to the step S33.

15 In the step S33, the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 issues a group acquisition response indicating that the acquisition of the group to which the user belongs has failed, and transmits the same to the Union merge provider 13.

20 In the step S34, the sub provider 14 acquires the group information of the group to which the user belongs from the directory 150 through the directory operation wrapper 141.

After the step S34, the process proceeds to
25 the step S35, and the UID conversion part 132 of the

sub provider 14 converts the UID peculiar to the directory 150 into an UID available in the Union merge provider 13.

Following the step S35, the process
5 proceeds to the step S36, and the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 issues the group acquisition response including the information of the group to which the user belongs and transmits the same to the Union merge provider 13.

10 The example of the group acquisition response from each sub provider 14 to the Union merge provider 13 will be described later with reference to Figure 23.

Furthermore, the step S24 of Figure 19
15 receives the group acquisition response transmitted in the step S33 or the step S36 of Figure 20.

Figure 21 shows an example of the XML message of the group acquisition request from the client to the Union merge provider.

20 As shown in Figure 21, the group acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and sent from the client to the Union merge provider 13 includes the session ticket ID 210 of the session ticket 200 of the Union merge provider 13 in
25 the tag of <session Ticket></session Ticket>. Further,

the UID identifying the user is contained in the tag of <Id></id>.

The client transmits the group acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs, which
5 contains the UID of the user and the session ticket ID 210 of the session ticket 200 of the Union merge provider 13, to the Union merge provider 13.

Figures 22A - 22C show the examples of the XML message of the group acquisition request from the
10 Union merge provider to the sub provider.

Figure 22A is the XML message of a group acquisition request sent to the Local directory provider 160, which is one of the sub providers 14, from the Union merge provider 13.

15 As shown in Figure 22A, the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and transmitted from the Union merge provider 13 to the Local directory provider 160 includes, in the tag of <session Ticket></session Ticket>, the session ticket
20 ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of the Local directory provider 160.

Also, in the tag of <Id></id>, the UID that identifies the user is contained. This UID is the one similar to the UID included in the XML message of
25 Figure 21.

Figure 22B is the XML message of a group acquisition request transmitted to the WinNT4 directory provider 161, which is one of the sub providers 14, from the Union merge provider 13.

5 As shown in Figure 22B, the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and transmitted from the Union merge provider 13 to the WinNT4 directory provider 161 includes the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of the WinNT4
10 directory provider 161 in the tag of <Session Ticket></session Ticket>.

 Further, in the tag <Id></id>, an UID that identifies the user is included. It should be noted that this UID is the one similar to the UID included
15 in the XML message of Figure 21.

Figure 22C is the XML message of a group acquisition request transmitted to the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 162, which is one of the sub providers 14, from the Union merge provider 13.

20 As shown in Figure 22C, the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and transmitted from the Union merge provider 13 to the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 162 includes
 the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300
25 of the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 162

in the tag <session Ticket></session Ticket>.

Further, the UID identifying the user is included in the tag <id></id>. This UID is the one similar to the UID included in the XML message of
5 Figure 21.

Because the Union merge provider 13 manages the session ticket with the hierarchical structure as explained it in Figure 17, it becomes possible to acquire the session ticket ID 310 of the session
10 ticket 300 of the Local directory provider 160 or the WinNT4 directory provider 161 or the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 162, which form the sub providers 14, on the basis of the session ticket ID 210 of the session ticket 200 of the Union merge
15 provider 13 contained in the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and transmitted from the client, and include the session ticket ID310 in the respective XML messages.

Figures 23A - 23C show examples of the XML
20 message of a group acquisition response to the Union merge provider from the sub provider.

Figure 23A is the XML message of a group acquisition response from the Local directory provider 160 to the Union merge provider 13, which is
25 one of the sub providers 14.

As shown in Figure 23A, the acquisition response of the group to which the user belongs and transmitted from the Local directory provider 160 to the Union merge provider 13 includes the group
5 information of the group to which the designated user belongs in the Local directory provider 160 in each tag `<item></item>` included in the tag `<group List></group List>`.

Figure 23B is the XML message of a group
10 acquisition response transmitted from the WinNT4 directory provider 161, which is one of the sub providers 14, to the Union merge provider 13.

As shown in Figure 23B, the acquisition response of the group to which the user belongs and
15 transmitted from the WinNT4 directory provider 161 to the Union merge provider 13 contains the group information of the group to which the designated user belongs in the WinNT4 directory provider 161 in each tag `<item></item>` included in the tag `<Group List></group List>`.
20

Figure 23C is the XML message of a group acquisition response transmitted from the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 162, which is one of the sub providers 14, to the Union merge provider
25 13.

As shown in Figure 23C, the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 161 transmits the acquisition response not containing the tag <item></item> to the Union merge provider 13 in the case the group information of the group to which the designated user belongs does not exist.

Each sub provider 14 acquires, in the case there exists the group to which the designated user belongs, the information of the group from the directory 150 and transmits the same to the Union merge provider 13.

Figure 24 is the XML message of a group acquisition response from the Union merge provider to the client.

As shown in Figure 24, the Union merge provider 13 merges and stores the <item></item> tag acquired from each of the sub providers 14 and includes the group information, in a single tag <group List></group List>, and transmits the same to the client.

The client can acquire the information about group of the user who is registered in each sub provider 14 that provides the service of the directory 150, from the Union merge provider 13, which manages the information, by transmitting the

acquisition request for the group to which the user belongs, the acquisition request containing the session ticket ID 210 of the session ticket 200 of the Union merge provider 13 and also the UID
5 identifying the user, to the Union merge provider 13.

For example, it should be noted that
<Item>G: Local: group1</item> and <item>G: Local:
group2</item> of Figure 24 are the information of the
group to which the user 323-53454244 registered in
10 the Local directory provider 160 as the user of
WinNT4 directory provider 161 belongs, while <item>G:
WinNT4: group1</item> and <item>G: WinNT4:
group2</item> of Figure 24 are the information of the
group to which the user 323-53454244 registered to
15 the WinNT4 directory provider 161 as the user of the
WinNT4 directory provider 161 belongs.

In the first example, explanation has thus
been made for the case in which the session ticket ID
210 and/or the session ticket ID 310 are transmitted
20 and received between the Union merge provider 13 and
sub provider 14 and between the Union merge provider
13 and the client, while this does not limit the
present invention, and it is possible to transmit and
receive also the session ticket 200 and/or the
25 session ticket 300.

Thus, in the Example 1, explanation has been made for the case in which the sub provider 14 does not require certification. In the Example 2 described below, explanation will be made for the case in which the sub provider 14 requires certification.

[Example 2]

Figure 25 is a functional block diagram of the Union merge provider and the sub providers according to Example 2 of the present invention.

In the Example 2, it is assumed that the sub providers 14 provide not only the user information and/or group information of the group to which the user belongs but also a certificationan authentication service of the user.

As shown in Figure 25, the Union merge provider 13 includes the provider I/F 130, the merge processing part 133, the sub provider calling part 134, the merge provider XML processing part 135, the sub provider registration department 136, the session managing part 137, an ID password analyzing part 138 and a certificationan authentication ticket managing part 139.

Further, the provider I/F 130 is formed of

the XML processing part 131 and the UID conversion part 132.

As for the construction of the Union merge provider 13 of Example 2 of Figure 25, it will be
5 noted that the ID password analyzing part 138 and the certification ticket managing part 139 are added newly to the construction of the Union merge provider 13 of Example 1 of Figure 16.

The ID password analyzing part 138 acquires
10 the ID and password contained to the issue request of ~~a certification~~ an authentication ticket 500 for certifying the user in the Union merge provider 13 and transmitted from a client (Web portal, for example), and forwards the same to the sub provider
15 calling part 134.

The sub provider calling part 134 forwards the ID and the password given from the ID password analyzing part 138 to the merge provider XML processing part 135 to be described later.

20 Further, the sub provider calling part 134 forwards the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 acquired it from a sub provider 14 that has succeeded in the certification and certifying the user in that sub provider 14 to
25 the certification ticket managing part 139 via the

merge provider XML processing part 135 as will be described later.

The merge provider XML processing part 135 creates an XML message based on the data given from
5 the sub provider calling part 134 and transmits the same to all the sub providers 14 registered to the sub provider registration department 136.

Further, the merge provider XML processing part 135 receives the XML message from the sub
10 provider 14 and gives the data to the sub provider calling part 134.

For example, upon reception of the certification response from a sub provider 14 that has succeeded in the certification, the certification
15 ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 that certifies the user in that sub provider 14 is given to the sub provider calling part 134.

The certification ticket managing part 139 creates and manages the certification ticket 500 that
20 certifies the user in the Union merge provider 13 based on the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 acquired from the sub provider 14 that has succeeded in the certification.

Further, the certification ticket managing
25 part 139 transmits the certification ticket ID 510 of

the certification ticket 500 thus created certifying the user in the Union merge provider 13 to a client (Web portal for example) requested the certification via the provider I/F 130 of the Union merge provider
5 13.

Figure 26 is a concept diagram for explaining the structure of the certification ticket of the Union merge provider.

As shown in Figure 26, the certification
10 ticket 500 of the Union merge provider 13 includes a—
~~certification~~an authentication ticket ID 510, a
provider type, the provider name of the providers for public release, the sub provider name, and a—
~~certification~~an authentication ticket 600 of the sub
15 provider in the structure thereof.

It should be noted that the certification ticket ID 510 is the identifier that distinguishes the certification ticket. On the other hand, the provider type represents the type of the provider
20 such as "Union merge", and the like.

Provider name of the provider for public release is the name of the Union merge provider 13 released to the public such as "Union merging 1", and the like.

25 It should be noted that the sub provider

name is the name of the sub provider 14 among the registered sub providers 14 in which the certification has been succeeded and the transmission of the certification ticket 600 has been made.

5 Further, the certification ticket of the sub provider is the certification ticket 600 of that sub provider 14 in which the certification has been succeeded and the transmission of the certification ticket 600 has been made.

10 By having the structure as shown in Figure 26, the user can finish the certification process in one time.

Furthermore, it is possible to include the decoded certification ticket 600 of the sub provider
15 14 in which the certification has been made successfully and the transmission of the certification ticket 600 has been made, in the certification ticket of the sub provider.

The sub provider 14 of Figure 25 is formed
20 of the provider I/F 130, the directory operation wrapper 141, the session managing part 142, the ID password analyzing part 143, and the certification ticket managing part 144.

As for the construction of the sub provider
25 14 in the Example 2 of Figure 25, it will be noted

that the ID password analyzing part 143 and the certification ticket managing part 144 are added newly to the construction of the sub provider 14 of the Example 1 of Figure 16.

5 The ID password analyzing part 143 acquires the ID and password included in the issue request for the certification ticket 600 transmitted from the Union merge provider 13 and confirms whether or not the ID and the password are in a valid combination by
10 referring to the user information saving part 152 of the directory 150 via the directory operation rapper 141.

 Further, the ID password analyzing part 143 acquires the user information of the corresponding
15 user from the directory 150 via the directory operation wrapper 141 in the event the ID and password are in the valid combination, and forwards the same to the certification ticket managing part 144.

20 The certification ticket managing part 144 then issues the certification ticket 600 certifying the user in the sub provider 14 based on the user information that given from the ID password analyzing part 143.

25 Figure 27 is a flowchart showing an example

of the certification ticket issue processing in the Union merge provider.

In the step S40, the XML processing part 131 of the Union merge provider 13 receives the issue request of the certification ticket 500 that certifies the user in the Union merge provider 13 from a client (Web portal for example).

The example of the certification ticket issue request from the client (Web portal for example) to the Union merge provider 13 will be explained later by using Figure 29.

Following the step S40, the process proceeds to step S41, the ID password analyzing part 138 forwards the ID and password included in the issue request for the certification ticket received it from the client (Web portal for example) in step S40 to the sub provider calling part 134.

After the step S41, the process proceeds to step S42, and the sub provider calling part 134 acquires the list of the sub providers 14 registered in the sub provider registration part 136.

Following the step S42, the process proceeds to the step S43, and the merge provider XML processing part 135 creates the issue request of the certification ticket 600 for certifying the user in

the sub provider 14 and including the ID and password acquired from the sub provider calling part 134, and transmits the same to each of the sub providers 14 registered to the list of sub providers 14.

5 The example the certification ticket issue request from the Union merge provider 13 to the sub provider 14 will be described later with reference to Figure 30.

 Following the step S43, the process
10 proceeds to the step S44 and the sub provider calling part 134 receives the certification ticket issue response for the issue request of certification ticket 600 from each of the sub providers 14 through the merge provider XML processing part 135.

15 The example of the certification ticket issue response from the sub provider 14 to the Union merge provider 13 will be described later with reference to Figure 31.

 Following the step S44, the process
20 proceeds to the step S45, and the sub provider calling part 134 determines whether or not the certification ticket ID 610 that distinguishes the certification ticket 600 is included in one of the certification ticket issue responses from the sub
25 providers 14 received in the step S44.

When it is determined that that certification ticket ID 610 distinguishing the certification ticket 600 is included in one of the certification ticket issue responses (YES in step
5 S45), the process proceeds to the step S47, while when it is determined that the certification ticket ID610 distinguishing the certification ticket 600 is not included, (NO in step S45), the process proceeds to the step S46.

10 In the step S46, the XML processing part 131 of the Union merge provider 13 creates the response indicative of failure of the issuing of the certification ticket 500 and transmits the same to the client (Web portal, for example).

15 In the step S47, the certification ticket managing part 139 creates the certification ticket 500 certifying the user in the Union merge provider 13 as explained with reference to Figure 26 by using the certification ticket ID610 of the sub provider 14.

20 Following the step S47, the process proceeds to the step S48, and the XML processing part 131 of the Union merge provider 13 creates the certification ticket issue response including the certification ticket ID 510 of the certification
25 ticket 500 created in the step S47, and transmits the

same to the client (Web portal, for example).

The example of the certification ticket
issue response describes later from the Union merge
provider 13 to the client (Web portal, for example)
5 will be explained later with reference to Figure 32.

Figure 28 is the flowchart showing an
example of the certification ticket issuing process
in a sub provider.

The sub provider 14 starts the processing
10 from the step S50 as shown below when the Union merge
provider 13 has transmitted the issue request of the
certification ticket 600 that certifies the user in
the sub provider 14 in the step S43 of Figure 27 to
each of the sub providers 14.

15 In the step S50, the XML processing part
131 of the sub provider 14 receives the issue request
for the certification ticket 600 that certifies the
user in the sub provider 14 from the Union merge
provider 13.

20 The example of the certification ticket
issue request from the Union merge provider 13 to the
sub provider 14 will be describes later with
reference to Figure 30.

Following the step S50, the process
25 proceeds to the step S51 and the ID password

analyzing part 143 determines whether or not the ID and password included in the issue request of the certification ticket 600 received in the step S50 are in a valid combination, by confirming with the
5 directory 150 via the directory operation wrapper 141.

When it is determined that the combination is valid combination, (YES in step S51), the process proceeds to the step S53, while when it is determined that the combination is not a valid combination (NO
10 in step S51), the process proceeds to the step S52.

In the step S52, the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 creates the certification ticket issue response indicating that the creation of the certification ticket 600 has been failed, and
15 transmits the same to the Union merge provider 13.

In the step S53, the certification ticket managing part 144 acquires the user information corresponding to the ID from the directory 150 via the directory operation wrapper 141.

20 Following the step S53, the process proceeds to the step S54, the certification ticket managing part 144 creates the certification ticket 600 certifying the user in the sub provider 14.

Following the step S54, the process
25 proceeds to the step S55, and the XML processing part

131 of the sub provider 14 creates the certification
ticket issue response including the certification
ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 created
in the step S54 and transmits the same to the Union
5 merge provider 13.

As we mentioned above, the example of the
certification ticket issue response from the sub
provider 14 to the Union merge provider 13 will be
described later with reference to Figure 31.

10 It should be noted that the step S44 of
Figure 27 receives the certification ticket issue
response transmitted in the step S52 or step S55 of
Figure 28.

Figure 29 is an example of the XML message
15 of a ~~certification~~ authentication ticket issue
request from the client to the Union merge provider.

As shown in Figure 29, the issue request of
the certification ticket 500 from the client (Web
portal, for example) to the Union merge provider 13
20 includes the domain name in the tag
<domainName></domainName> and the user name in the
tag <Name></Name>, and the password in the tag
<passwd></passwd>.

The client (Web portal, for example)
25 transmits the issue request of the certification

ticket 500 that contains the domain name, the user name and the password to the Union merge provider 13.

Figure 30 is an example of the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket issue
5 request from an Union merge provider to sub provider.

As shown in Figure 30, the Union merge provider 13 transmits the issue request for the certification ticket 600 certifying the user in the sub provider 14 and containing the domain name and
10 the user name and the password included in the issue request of the certification ticket 500 transmitted from the client (Web portal, for example) as they are, to the sub provider 14.

Figure 31 is an example of the XML message
15 of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket issue response to the Union merge provider from the sub provider.

As shown in Figure 31, the certification ticket issue response from the sub provider 14 to the
20 Union merge provider 13 includes the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 created in the sub provider 14 in the tag
<authTicket></authTicket>.

The sub provider 14 creates the
25 certification ticket 600 that certifies the user in

the sub provider 14 when the certification has been
succeeded transmits the certification ticket issue
response including the certification ticket ID 610 of
the certification ticket 600 to the Union merge
5 provider 13.

Figure 32 is an example of the XML message
of ~~a certification~~ an authentication ticket issue
response from the Union merge provider to the client.

As shown in Figure 32 the certification
10 ticket issue response from the Union merge provider
13 to the client (Web portal, for example) in the tag
of <authTicket></authTicket>.

The Union merge provider 13 creates the
certification ticket 500 certifying the user in the
15 Union merge provider explained in Figure 26 when it
has acquired the certification ticket ID 610 of the
certification ticket 600 created in the sub provider
14 from sub provider 14 as explained in Figure 31,
the certification ticket issue response including
20 certification ticket ID 510 of said certification
ticket 500 is transmitted to the client (Web portal,
for example).

Hereinafter, the processing of the Union
merge provider 13 and the sub provider 14 for the
25 case the confirmation request of the certification

ticket ID 510 transmitted in the above-mentioned certification ticket issue response has been transmitted from the client (application, for example).

5 Figure 33 is the flowchart showing an example of the certification ticket ID confirmation processing in the Union merge provider.

 In the step S60, the XML processing part 131 of the Union merge provider 13 receives the
10 confirmation request of the certification ticket ID 510 from the client (application, for example).

 The example of the certification ticket ID confirmation request from the client (application, for example) to the Union merge provider 13 will be
15 described later with reference to Figure 35.

 Following the step S60, the process proceeds to step S61, and the certification ticket managing part 139 acquires the certification ticket ID510 included in the confirmation request of the
20 certification ticket ID 510 received in the step S60.

 Following the step S61, the process proceeds to the step S62, and certification ticket managing part 139 determines whether or not the certification ticket ID510 acquired in the step S61
25 is a valid certification ticket ID 510.

When it is determined that it is a valid certification ticket ID510 (YES in step S62), the process proceeds to the step S63, while when it is determined that it is not a valid certification
5 ticket ID510 (NO in step S62), the process proceeds to the step S67.

In the step S63, the certification ticket managing part 139 forwards the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 of the sub
10 provider 14 included in the certification ticket 500 of the Union merge provider 13 and the sub provider name to sub provider calling part 134.

Following the step S63, the process proceeds to the step S64, and the merge provider XML
15 processing part 135 creates the certification ticket ID confirmation request for the sub provider 14 including the certification ticket ID610, by using the certification ticket ID610 of the certification ticket 600 of the sub provider 14 acquired via the
20 sub provider calling part 134, and transmits the same to the sub provider 14.

The example of the certification ticket ID confirmation request from the Union merge provider 13 to the sub provider 14 will be described later with
25 reference to Figure 36.

Following the step S64, the process proceeds to the step S65, and the sub provider calling part 134 receives the confirmation response of the certification ticket ID 610 from the sub
5 provider 14 that has transmitted the above-mentioned certification ticket ID confirmation request via the merge provider XML processing part 135.

The example of the certification ticket ID confirmation response from the sub provider 14 to the
10 Union merge provider 13 will be described later with reference to Figure 37.

Following the step S65, the process proceeds to the step S66, and the sub provider calling part 134 determines whether or not the user
15 information is included in the confirmation response of the certification ticket ID 610 received in the step S65.

When it is determined that the user information is contained (YES in step S66), the
20 process proceeds to the step S68, while when it is determined that the user information is not contained (NO in step S66), the process proceeds to the step S67.

In the step S67, the XML processing part
25 131 of the Union merge provider 13 creates the

response indicating that the confirmation of certification ticket ID 510 has failed, and transmits the same to the client (application, for example).

In the step S68, the sub provider calling
5 part 134 acquires the UID included in the user information acquired in the step S66 and the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 for each of the sub providers 14 and the sub provider name managed in the session managing part 137 and provides
10 the same to the merge provider XML processing part 135.

In the Step S69, the merge provider XML processing part 135 creates the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and includes
15 the UID identifying the user and the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 for each of the sub providers 14, as explained in the Example 1, and transmit the same to each sub provider 14.

Following the step S69, the process
20 proceeds to the step S70, and the sub provider calling part 134 receives the group acquisition response for the group acquisition request from each of the sub providers 14 via the merge provider XML processing part 135.

25 Following the step S70, the process

proceeds to the step S71, and the merge processing part 133 merges the user information acquired in the step S66 and the group information of the group to which the user belongs and contained in the user
5 group acquisition response acquired in the step S70.

Following the step S71, the process proceeds to the step S72, and the XML processing part 131 of the Union merge provider 13 creates the certification ticket ID confirmation response
10 including the user information and the group information of the group to which the user belongs and merged in the step S71 and transmits to the client (application for example).

The example of the certification ticket ID confirmation response from the Union merge provider
15 13 to the client will be described later with reference to Figure 38.

Figure 34 is a flowchart showing an example of the certification ticket ID confirmation
20 processing in a sub provider.

The sub provider 14 starts the processing from the step S80 explained below, when the Union merge provider 13 has transmitted the confirmation request for the certification ticket ID 610 in the
25 sub provider 14 in the step S64 of Figure 33.

In the step S80, the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 receives the confirmation request of the certification ticket ID610 from the Union merge provider 13.

5 As mentioned above the example of the certification ticket ID confirmation request from the Union merge provider 13 to the sub provider 14 will be described later with reference to Figure 36.

 Following the step S80, the process
10 proceeds to the step S81, and the UID conversion part 132 of the sub provider 14 converts the UID included in the confirmation request of the certification ticket ID610 received in the step S80 into the UID pertinent to the directory 150.

15 Following the step S81, the process proceeds to the step S82, and the certification ticket managing part 144 determines whether or not the certification ticket ID 610 contained in the confirmation request of the certification ticket
20 ID610 received in the step S80 is the valid certification ticket ID 610 of a valid certification ticket 600.

 When it is determined that it is the certification ticket ID 610 of a valid certification
25 ticket 600 (YES in step S82), the process proceeds to

the step S84, while when it is determined that it is the certification ticket ID 610 of an invalid certification ticket 600 (NO in step S82), the process proceeds to the step S83.

5 In the step S83, the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 creates the certification ticket ID confirmation response indicating that the confirmation of the certification ticket ID 610 has failed and transmits the same to the Union merge
10 provider 13.

 In the step S84, the sub provider 14 acquires the user information from the directory 150 via the directory operation wrapper 141.

 Following the step S84, the process
15 proceeds to the step S85, and the UID conversion part 132 of the sub provider 14 converts the UID peculiar to the directory 150 into an UID available in the Union merge provider 13.

 Following the step S85, the process
20 proceeds to the step S86, and the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 creates the certification ticket ID confirmation response including the user information acquired in the step S84 and transmits the same to the Union merge provider 13.

25 As we mentioned above, the example of the

certification ticket ID confirmation response from the sub provider 14 to the Union merge provider 13 will be described later with reference to Figure 37.

It should be noted that the step S65 of
5 Figure 33 receives the certification ticket ID confirmation response transmitted in the step S83 or the step S86 of Figure 34.

Figure 35 is an example of the XML message of ~~a certification~~an authentication ticket ID
10 confirmation request from the client to the Union merge provider.

As shown in Figure 35, the certification ticket ID confirmation request from the client (application, for example) to the Union merge
15 provider 13 includes, in the tag of <authTicket></authTicket>, the certification ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 that certifies the user in the Union merge provider 13.

The client (application, for example)
20 transmits the confirmation request of the certification ticket ID510 including the certification ticket ID510 of the certification ticket 500 certifying the user in the Union merge provider 13, to the Union merge provider 13.

25 Figure 36 is an example of the XML message

of a ~~certification~~ an authentication ticket ID confirmation request transmitted from the Union merge provider to the sub provider.

As shown in Figure 36, the certification
5 ticket ID confirmation request from the Union merge provider 13 to the sub provider 14 includes, in the tag <authTicket></authTicket>, the certification ticket ID610 of the certification ticket 600 that certifies the user in the sub provider 14.

10 Because the Union merge provider 13 manages the certification ticket 600 of the sub provider 14 succeeded in the certification in the form included in the certification ticket 500 of that Union merge provider 13 as explained with reference to Figure 26,
15 it becomes possible to acquire the certification ticket ID610 of the certification ticket 600 of the sub provider 14, which has succeeded in the certification, and include the certification ticket ID610 in the XML message based on the certification
20 ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 of the Union merge provider 13 included in the certification ticket confirmation request transmitted from the client (application, for example).

Figure 37 is an example of the XML message
25 of the certification ticket ID confirmation response

to the Union merge provider from the sub provider.

As shown in Figure 37, the confirmation response of the certification ticket ID 610 from the sub provider 14 to the Union merge provider 13 includes the user name in the tag of `<Name></name>`, the UID of the user in the tag `<Id></id>`, the group information of the group to which the user belongs in sub provider 14 in each tag of `<item></item>` included in the tag `<groupList></groupList>`.

10 The sub provider 14 acquires the group information of the group to which the user belongs from the directory 150 in the event there exist the user information and the group to which the user belongs, and transmits the same to the Union merge
15 provider 13.

Figure 38 is an example of the XML message of the certification ticket ID confirmation response from the Union merge provider to the client.

As shown in Figure 38, the Union merge
20 provider 13 includes the name of the user in the tag `<Name></name>`, the UID of the user in the tag `<Id></id>`, and the group information acquired from each of the sub providers 14 in one or more tags of `<item></item>` included in a tag
25 `<groupList></groupList>`, and transmits the same to

the client.

As explained in Figure 37, the Union merge provider 13 can acquire the UID from one of the sub providers 14, and because of this, it becomes
5 possible to acquire the group information of the group to which the user belongs from of the sub providers 14 as explained in Example 1 by using the UID and the session ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of the sub provider 14, to which the registration has
10 been made.

As explained with Example 2, even in the case that sub provider 14 has required the certification, it is possible to acquire the group information to which the user belongs from all of the
15 sub providers 14, by merely transmitting the user name and the password once to the Union merge provider 13 for certification.

In the explanation of Example 2, explanation has been made for the case that
20 certification ticket ID 510 and/or the certification ticket ID 610 are transmitted and received between the Union merge provider 13 and the sub provider 14 and the Union merge provider 13 and client, this does not limit the invention and it is possible to
25 transmit and receive the certification ticket 500

and/or the certification ticket 600 as well. This applied also to the description below.

Also, in both Example 1 and Example 2, explanation has been made for the case the directory
5 150 is independent from the sub provider 14, it is possible to construct each of the sub providers 14 to include the directory 150 therein.

For the sake of simplicity of explanation, the description hereinafter will be made for the case
10 the directory 150 is included in each of the sub providers 14.

Hereinafter, the example of introducing the Union merge provider 13 will be explained with reference to Figure 39.

15 Figure 39 is a diagram for explaining the example of conducting the certification of the user by utilizing the Union merge provider and acquiring the accumulation document accumulated in the repository service.

20 In the step S100, the log-in name and the password input by the user are transmitted from the Web browser 1 to the Web portal 2.

Following the step S100, the process proceeds to the step S101, and the Web portal 2
25 transmits the issue request of the certification

ticket 500 in the Union merge provider 13 and containing the log-in name and the password received in the step S1 to the Union merge provider 13.

Following the step S101, the process
5 proceeds to the step S102, and the Union merge provider 13 transmits the request of issuing the certification ticket 600 in the sub provider 14 containing the above-mentioned log-in name and the password to the WinNT certification directory
10 provider 7, the Notes (trade mark) R5 certification directory provider 12 and the Local certification directory provider 8 that constitute the sub providers 14.

The WinNT certification directory provider
15 7, the Notes (trade mark) R5 certification directory provider 12 and the Local certification directory provider 8 constituting sub providers 14 carries out the certification by using the log-in name and the password, and issues the certification ticket 600 in
20 the case the certification has been succeeded

Following the step S102, the process proceeds to the step S103, and the WinNT certification directory provider 7, the Notes (trade mark) R5 certification directory provider 12 and the
25 Local certification directory provider 8 constituting

the sub providers 14 creates the certification ticket issue response to the certification ticket issue request and transmits the same to the Union merge provider 13.

5 For example, in the case the user has input the log-in name and the password of WinNT to the Web browser 1, the certification succeeds in the WinNT certification directory provider 7 and the certification ticket 600 is issued.

10 In this case, the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 thus issued is included in the certification ticket issue response transmitted to the Union merge provider 13 from the WinNT certification directory provider 7, while the
15 certification ticket issue response transmitted to the Union merge provider 13 from other sub providers 14 includes the information indicating that creation of the certification ticket 600 has failed.

 Following the step S103, the process
20 proceeds to the step S104, and the Union merge provider 13 creates the certification ticket 500 certifying the user in the Union merge provider 13 upon acquisition of the certification ticket issue response was containing the certification ticket ID
25 610 from one of the sub providers 14 and transmits

the certification ticket issue response including the certification ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 thus issued to the Web portal 2.

Following the step S104, the process
5 proceeds to the step S105, and the Web portal 2 transmits the information indicating that the certification has been made successfully to the Web browser 1

Following the step S105, the process
10 proceeds to the step S106, and the Web browser 1 transmits the use start request indicating the use of the services provided by the repository service 170 to the Web portal 2.

Following the step S106, the process
15 proceeds to the step S107, and the Web portal 2 transmits the issue request of the session ticket 700 that permits the use of the services and including the certification ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 that certifies the user in the Union merge
20 provider 13 and acquired in the step S104, to the repository service 170.

Following the step S107, the process
proceeds to the step S108, and the repository service 170 transmits the certification ticket ID
25 confirmation request including the certification

ticket ID 510 included in the issue request of the
above-mentioned session ticket 700 to the Union merge
provider 13, in order to confirm whether or not the
issue request of the session ticket 700 received in
5 the step S107 is the request from a valid user.

Following the step S108, the process
proceeds to the step S109, and the Union merge
provider 13 transmits the confirmation request of the
certification ticket ID 610 acquired from one of the
10 sub providers 14 to the sub provider 14 in the step
S103.

Because the Union merge provider 13 holds
the information which sub provider 14 has succeeded
in the certification in the step S103, it is possible
15 to construct such that the confirmation request of
certification ticket ID610 is transmitted only to sub
provider 14 in which the certification has been
succeeded.

Following the step S109, the process
20 proceeds to the step S110, and the WinNT
certification directory provider 7, the Notes (trade
mark) R5 certification directory provider 12 and the
Local certification directory provider 8 constituting
the sub providers 14 transmit the confirmation
25 response of the certification ticket ID 610 to the

Union merge provider 13 in response to the confirmation request of the certification ticket ID 610.

For example, in the case the sub provider
5 14 that has succeeded in the certification is the WinNT certification directory provider 7, the WinNT certification directory provider 7 transmits the confirmation response of the certification ticket ID 610 including the UID of the user corresponding to
10 the certification ticket ID 610 to the Union merge provider 13.

Following the step S110, the process proceeds to the step S111, and the Union merge provider 13 transmits the acquisition request of the
15 group information of the group to which the user corresponding to the UID belongs and containing the UID acquired in the step S110 and the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 for each of the sub providers 14, to each of the sub providers 14.

20 Following the step S111, the process proceeds to the step S112, and each sub provider 14 creates the acquisition response including the group information of the group to which the user corresponding to the acquired UID belongs and
25 transmits the same to the Union merge provider 13.

Following the step S112, the process proceeds to the step S113, and the Union merge provider 13 merges the user information acquired in step S110 and the group information of the group to which the user belongs and acquired in the step S112 and creates the certification ticket ID confirmation response including the merged information, and transmits the same to the repository service 170.

Following the step S113, the process proceeds to the step S114, and the repository service 170 creates, when there exists a group in the groups acquired in the step S113 permitting the use of the service provided by that repository service 170, for example, the session ticket 700 that permits the use of the service, and transmits the issue response of the session ticket including the session ticket ID 710 of the session ticket 700 to the Web portal 2.

Following the step S114, the process proceeds to the step S115, and the Web portal 2 transmits the response indicating that the use start of the service has been permitted to the Web browser 1.

Following the step S115, the process proceeds to the step S116, and the Web browser 1 transmits the request indicating that the

accumulation document that the repository service 170 has accumulated is going to be acquired to the Web portal 2.

Following the step S116, the process
5 proceeds to the step S117, and the Web portal 2 transmits the acquisition request of the accumulation document including the session ticket ID 710 of the session ticket 700 acquired in the step S114 to the repository service 170.

10 Following the step S117, the process proceeds to the step S118, and the repository service 170 determines whether or not the session ticket ID 710 included in the acquisition request for the accumulation document acquired in the step S117 is
15 the session ticket ID 710 of a valid session ticket 700, and when it is determined that it a valid session ticket ID 710, the repository service 170 transmits the acquisition response of the accumulation document including the designated
20 accumulation document, to the Web portal 2.

Following the step S118, the process proceeds to the step S119, and the Web portal 2 transmits the accumulation document that has been acquired in the step S118 to the Web browser 1.

25 As mentioned above, even in the case that

the authority for acquiring the document accumulated in the repository service 170 is given only to the group registered to the Local certification directory provider 8, it becomes possible, by introducing the
5 Union merge provider 13,
that a the user certified with the WinNT certification directory provider 7 can acquire the document accumulated in the repository service 170 in the case the same user belongs the group of the 1
10 certification directory provider 8 because of the fact that the Union merge provider 13 can manage the information of the group of other sub providers 14 to which the same user belongs in the merged state.

Figure 40 is a diagram for explaining the
15 example of integration for the case there exist plural Union merge providers.

As explained with reference to Figure 17, the Union merge provider 13 has the session ticket 200 with a hierarchical structure, and because of
20 this, it is possible to integrate, in the case that the system having the Union merge provider 13 exists in plural numbers as shown in Figure 40, these systems into a new group by introducing a Union merge provider 13 (Union merge provider 0 of FIG.40).

[EXAMPLE 3]

Hereinafter, the example of taking out the information (construction information) regarding the Union merge provider 13 and the sub provider 14 to
5 the outside of the Union merge provider 13 for holding and managing in the configuration manager 22 to be described later will be explained.

Figure 41 is a fourth diagram for explaining the construction of the UCS.

10 In Figure 41, the explanation will be made based on the assumption that all of the sub providers 14 and the Union merge provider 13 are included in the UCS 49 as noted before with reference to Figure 13 for the sake of simplicity of explanation. As
15 noted before, a part or all of the sub providers 14 may be included in other fusion machine 120.

It should be noted that the UCS 49 shown in Figure 41 contains the dispatcher 21, the configuration manager 22, the Union merge provider 13
20 and the sub providers 14₁ - 14_n.

The dispatcher 21 receives the request from the client and distributes the same to the configuration manager 22 or the Union merge provider 13, or transmits the processing result of the
25 configuration manager 22 and the Union merge provider

13 processed according to the distribution request to the client.

The configuration manager 22 is managing part managing the construction of the Union merge provider 13 and the sub providers 14₁ - 14_n and holds
5 the construction information, and the like, in the storage part.

Here, it should be noted that the Union merge provider 13 and the sub provider 14 are
10 identical to those explained with reference to Example 1 or Example 2.

Hereinafter, the example of the provider list acquisition sequence will be explained with reference to Figure 42, wherein it should be noted
15 that Figure 42 is a diagram for explaining the example of the provider list acquisition sequence.

As shown in Figure 42, the client transmits, in the example of adding a new provider as the sub provider 14 of the Union merge provider 13, transmits
20 the provider list acquisition request including the getProviderList method of the dispatcher 21, to the dispatcher 21 (Sequence SQ1).

The example of the provider list acquisition request will be explained later with
25 reference to Figure 43.

The dispatcher 21 that has received the provider list acquisition request calls the enumerateProviderName method of the configuration manager 22 (Sequence SQ2).

5 The configuration manager 22 that has been subjected to the call of the enumerateProviderName method acquires the provider name, and the like, from the storage part and returns the same to the dispatcher 21 as the provider list.

10 The dispatcher 21 creates the provider list acquisition response including the provider list and transmits the same to the requesting client. The example of the provider list acquisition response will be explained later with reference to Figure 44.

15 For example, by conducting the processing shown in Figure 42, the client displays the list of the providers and the user can select the provider to be added newly from the list of the providers as the sub provider 14 of the Union merge provider 13

20 Hereinafter, the example of the provider list acquisition request will be shown with reference to Figure 43, wherein Figure 43 is an example of the the XML message of a provider list acquisition request from the client to the dispatcher.

25 As shown in Figure 43, it can be seen that

the `getProviderList` method is included in the provider list acquisition request.

Hereinafter, an example of the provider list acquisition response will be described with
5 reference to Figure 44, wherein Figure 44 is an example of the XML message of the provider list acquisition response from the dispatcher to the client.

As shown in Figure 44, the name of the
10 provider (or the identifier distinguishing the provider) is stored in the tag of `<item></item>`.

Next, an example of the sub provider addition sequence will be explained with reference to Figure 45, wherein Figure 45 is a diagram explaining
15 the example of the sub provider addition sequence.

When the user has selected the provider to be added from the provider list as shown in Figure 45 by using a GUI (Graphical User Interface) to be described later, the client transmits the sub
20 provider addition request including the `createProvider` method of dispatcher 21 to the dispatcher 21 (sequence SQ10). Here, the example of the sub provider addition request will be shown later with reference to Figure 46. While being omitted in
25 Figure 45, the sub provider addition request includes

the information as to what sub provider 14 is to be added to what Union merge providers 13.

The dispatcher 21 that has received the sub provider addition request calls the
5 createProviderConfiguration method of the configuration manager 22 (sequence SQ11).

The configuration manager 22 called by the createProviderConfiguration method secures a new region in the storage part for storing the
10 construction information and returns the storage area information regarding that region. (head address, and the like of the newly secured region) to the dispatcher 21.

The dispatcher 21 that has thus acquired
15 the storage area information calls the createProvider method of the sub provider 14 to be added while using the storage area information as the argument (Sequence SQ12).

The sub provider 14 having the
20 createProvider method thus called calls the setAttribute method of the configuration manager 22 (Sequence SQ13) while using the storage area information provided as the argument of the createProvider method and further the default
25 construction information of the identifier, the name

of the sub provider 14, and the like, as the argument.

The configuration manager 22 having the
setAttribute method thus called stores the
construction information including the default
5 construction information of the sub provider 14 given
as the argument of the setAttribute method in a
corresponding storage region based on the storage
area information given as the argument of the
setAttribute method.

10 The dispatcher 21 received the information
indicating that the construction information has been
stored from the configuration manager 22 creates the
sub provider addition response including the
information indicating that the addition of the
15 provider has completed normally, and transmits the
same to the requesting client. The example of the sub
provider addition response will be shown later with
reference to in Figure 47.

By conducting the processing shown in
20 Figure 45, it is possible to add a new provider as
the sub provider 14 of the Union merge provider 13.

Hereinafter, the example of the sub
provider addition request will be explained with
reference to Figure 46, wherein Figure 46 is the XML
25 message of a sub provider addition request from the

client to the dispatcher.

As shown in Figure 46, the sub provider addition request includes the createProvider method. Further, the identifier or the name of the Union
5 merge provider is included in the tag
<unionMergeproviderName></unionMergeproviderName> as,
the argument of the createProvider method. Also, the
identifier or the name of the sub provider to be
newly added is included in
10 <subproviderName></subproviderName> of the
<item></item> tag.

Hereinafter, the example of the sub provider addition response will be explained with reference to Figure 47, wherein Figure 47 is the XML
15 message of a sub provider addition response from the dispatcher to the client.

As shown in Figure 47, the tag
<returnValue></returnValue> of the sub provider
addition response includes the information
20 representing whether or not the addition of the sub
provider has been successful (O.K. in the example of
Figure 47).

Hereinafter, an example of the hardware construction of the client will be explained with
25 reference to Figure 48, wherein Figure 48 is the

hardware construction diagram of a client.

The hardware construction of the client shown in Figure 48 is formed of an input device 51, a display device 52, a drive device 53, a recording
5 medium 54, a ROM55, a RAM56, a CPU57, an interface device 58 and a HDD59 connected with each other by a bus.

The input device 51 is formed of a keyboard, mouse, and the like operated by the user of the
10 client and is used for inputting the various operational signals to the client. On the other hand, the display device 52 is formed of a display, and the like, used by the user of the client and is used for displaying various information. The interface device
15 58 is an interface connecting the client to the network 5, and the like.

For example, the application program, and the like used for implementing the processing in the client is provided to the client by the recording
20 medium 54 of the CD-ROM, and the like, or downloaded through the network 5. The recording medium 54 is set to the drive device 53 and the application program is installed to the HDD 59 from the recording medium 54 through the drive device 53.

25 The ROM 55 stores the data, and the like.

The RAM56 reads the application program, and the like, from the HDD 59 at the time of the activation of the client and holds the same. The CPU57 carries out the processing according to the application program, and
5 the like, read out to the RAM 56 and held therein. Further, the HDD 59 stores the data, files, and the like.

Although the foregoing explanation has been made by using the fusion machine 120 as an example of
10 the apparatus on which the Union merge provider 13 and/or the sub provider 14 are mounted, it is also possible to construct so as to be mounted on a PC (personal computer) shown in Figure 48.

Hereinafter, an example of the function of
15 the client will be explained with reference to Figure 49, wherein Figure 49 is a functional block diagram of a client.

As shown in Figure 49, the client includes the GUI display part 71, a control unit 72, a server
20 calling part 73 and a XML generation analysis part 74.

The GUI display part 71 is the display part creating GUI to be describes later and displaying the same in the display, and the like, of the client. The control unit 72 is the control unit that controls the
25 overall processing of the client. The server calling

part 73 is the calling part that calls the server including the Union merge provider 13, and the like. Further, the XML generation analysis part 74 generates the XML and transmits the same to the
5 server and further analyzes the XML message received from the server and acquires the data, and the like included in the XML message.

Hereinafter, an example of the GUI for setting up the provider in the client will be shown
10 in Figure 50, wherein Figure 50 is a first diagram showing the GUI regarding the setting up of the provider in the client.

The client creates, when the provider list acquisition response shown in Figure 44 is received,
15 the user certification provider setting screen that contains the list of the provider in the drop down menu as shown in Figure 50A based on the list of the providers included in the provider list acquisition response and displays the same.

20 It should be noted that the content of the group box displayed under the drop down menu of the user certification provider setting screen shown in Figure 50A changes by the provider which the user has selected from the drop down menu.

25 For example, when the user has selected

"certification service reference" and clicked the
"reference" button in Figure 50A, the client displays
the reference screen for the external certification
as shown in Figure 50B. Here, it should be noted that
5 the external certification is the certification that
carries out the actual certification (the ID password
analyzing part 143 and the certification ticket
managing part 144 in the example of Figure 25), by
using an server, and the like as the certification
10 engine.

When the user has clicked the "reference"
button in Figure 50B, the client displays the user
certification service management reference screen as
shown in Figure 50C.

15 Hereinafter, another example of the GUI for
setting up the client will be shown in Figure 51,
wherein Figure 51 is the second diagram showing the
GUI for setting up the provider in the client.

In Figure 51, an example screen is shown
20 for the case in which the user has chosen the Windows
(trade mark) the NT certification in the drop down
menu. It should be noted that the "setting of domain
controller" button of Figure 51 becomes effective
only in the case the user has selected "self
25 certification setting".

Hereinafter, the example other GUI for setting up the provider in the client will be shown in Figure 52, wherein Figure 52 is the third diagram showing the GUI for setting up the provider in the client.

In Figure 52, an example screen for the case that the user has selected the ActiveDirectory (trade mark) certification in the drop down menu. Here, it should be noted that the "setting of the domain controller" button of Figure 52 becomes effective only in the case that the user has selected "the self certification setting".

Hereinafter, a further example of the GUI for setting up the provider in the client will be shown in Figure 53, wherein Figure 53 is the fourth diagram showing the GUI for setting the provider in the client.

Figure 53 shows an example screen for the case the user has selected the Notes (trade mark) certification in the drop down menu.

Hereinafter, the example of a remote provider will be explained with reference to Figure 54, wherein Figure 54 is a diagram explaining the example of a remote provider.

For example, in the case the Union merge

provider 13 and/or the sub provider 14 has the
"is_exported" attribute set to TRUE in the definition
file, it is possible to conduct the processing as a
remote provider as will be describe later. Here, the
5 remote provider is the provider not having a-
~~certification~~an authentication engine for itself in
the case the provider is a ~~certification~~an
authentication provider and carries out the
processing according to the request from the client
10 by utilizing the certification engine of other
providers as noted before. Here, the definition file
is included in the configuration manager 22, and the
like, for example.

For example, the sub provider 14,
15 determines whether or not the "is_exported" attribute
is TRUE when it receives the use request of the
service (certification service, for example) from the
client or the Union merge provider 13 (sequence SQ20),
by referring to the definition file etc.

20 When it is determined that the
"is_exported" attribute is TRUE, the sub provider 141
acquires the connection destination information
stored in the registry, and the like, assuming that
the sub provider 14, itself is a remote provider, and
25 requests transfer of the service use request to the

connection destination (Sequence SQ21).

The sub provider 14_n that has received the use request of the service determines whether or not the "is_shared" attribute is TRUE by referring to the
5 definition file.

When it is determined that the "is_shared" attribute is TRUE, the sub provider 14_n carries out the processing according to the use request for the service and returns the result of the processing to
10 the remote provider (sub provider 14₁).

When the remote provider (sub provider 14₁) receives the processing result from the sub provider 14_n, the sub provider 14₁ applies a post-processing to the result of processing according to the needs
15 and returns the result thus added with the post-processing to the requesting original client or the Union merge provider 13.

Hereinafter, the example of processing of a remote provider will be explained with reference to
20 Figure 55, wherein Figure 55 is a diagram explaining an example of the processing related to a remote provider.

In the Step S200, the sub provider 14₁ receives the use request of the service from the
25 client or the Union merge provider 13.

Following the step S200, the process proceeds to the step S201, and the sub provider 14₁ determines whether or not the "is_exported" attribute is TRUE by referring to the definition file. When it
5 is determined that the "is_exported" attribute is TRUE, the sub provider 14₁ proceeds to the step S202, while when it determined that the "is_exported" attribute is FALSE, determination is made whether or not the "is_shared" attribute is real. For the sake
10 of simplification of explanation, the processing for the case in which "is_exported" attribute is FALSE is omitted in Figure 55.

In the step S202, sub provider 14₁ acquires the connection destination information stored in a
15 registry, and the like based on the judgment that there exists a remote provider.

Following the step S202, the process proceeds to the step S203 and the sub provider 14₁ forwards the use request for the service received in
20 the step S200 to the connection destination acquired in the step S202.

Following the step S203, the process proceeds to the step S204 and the sub provider 14_n of the connection destination receives the forwarded use
25 request of the service from the remote provider.

Following the step S204, the process proceeds to the step S205 and the sub provider 14_n of the connection destination determines whether or not the is_shared attribute is TRUE by referring to the definition file. When it is determined that the
5 "is_shared" attribute is TRUE, the sub provider 14_n of the connection destination proceeds to the step S206 and returns NG to the remote provider when it is determined that the "is_shared" attribute is FALSE.

10 In step S206, the sub provider 14_n of the connection destination reads out the mutual trust relationship of the request source remote provider from the configuration manager 22.

Following the step S206, the process
15 proceeds to the step S207 and the sub provider 14_n of the connection destination determines whether or not there is mutual trust relationship to between the own sub provider 14_n and the request source remote provider. When it is determined that there exists no
20 mutual trust relationship between the own sub provider 14_n and the request source remote provider, the process proceeds to the step S208 and the sub provider 14_n of the connection destination returns NG to the request source remote provider.

25 In the step S208, the sub provider 14_n of

the connection destination carries out the processing according to the needs.

Following step S208, the process proceeds to the step S209 and the sub provider 14_n of the
5 connection destination returns the result of the processing to the request source remote provider.

Following the step S209, the process proceeds to the step S210 and the remote provider receives the result of processing from the sub
10 provider 14_n of the connection destination.

Following the step S210, the process proceeds to the step S211, and a remote provider adds a necessary post-processing to the processing result received in the step S210.

15 Following the step S211, the process proceeds to the step S212, and the remote provider returns the processing result added with a necessary post-processing in the step S211 to the request source client or the Union merge provider 13.

20

[SECOND EMBODIMENT]

Hereinafter, another embodiment of the present invention will be described with reference to the drawings, wherein those parts corresponding to
25 the parts explained previously are designated by the

same reference numerals.

Figure 56 is a diagram explaining the example in which a join merge provider of the present invention is introduced.

5 Referring to Figure 56, the system of Figure 56 is formed of a Web browser 1, a Web portal 2, a Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7 constituting a sub-sub provider, a Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8
10 constituting a sub-sub provider, an application 11, a Local certification directory provider 12 constituting a main sub provider, and a join merge provider 13A.

 Thus, in the construction of Figure 56, it
15 can be seen that the join merge provider 13A is introduced newly in place of the provider 9 of Figure 5 showing the conventional technology.

 Also, as shown in Figure 56, the join merge provider 13A includes an integrated directory 180 to
20 be described later.

 In the description below, the main-sub provider and the sub-sub provider may be called simply as a sub provider for the sake of simplicity of explanation.

25 Hereinafter, the example of the members of

the group registered in the Local certification directory provider 12 shown in Figure 56 will be explained with reference to Figure 57, wherein Figure 57 is a diagram explaining an example of the members
5 of the group registered to the Local certification directory provider shown in Figure 56.

As shown in Figure 57, the Local certification directory provider 12 of Figure 56 holds the users and groups of other providers as the
10 members of the group of Local certification directory provider 12.

Thus, the group Group1 of the Local certification directory provider 12 shown in Figure 56 has the user Kana of the Windows (trade mark)
15 certification directory provider 7, the user Maeda of Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7, and the user Kana of the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8 as the members.

Further, the Local certification directory
20 provider 12 shown in Figure 56 holds the user information, and the like, of other providers as the user ID.

Hereinafter, an example of the user ID structure of the Local certification directory
25 provider 12 shown in Figure 56 will be explained by

using Figures 58A and 58B, wherein Figures 58A and 58B diagrams for explaining an example of the structure of the user ID of the Local certification directory provider shown in Figure 56.

5 As shown in Figure 58A, the user ID of the Local certification directory provider 12 of Figure 56 includes the ID type, the identifier of the provider conducted the certification, and the identifier of the user in the provider that has
10 conducted the certification.

 The ID type represents whether it is a user or a group while the identifier of the provider that has conducted the certification represents whether it is a Windows (trade mark) provider or a Notes (trade
15 mark) provider, for example. Also, the identifier of the user in the provider that has conducted the certification represents Kana, Kurose, Maeda, and the like.

 Figure 58B is an example of the user ID of
20 Figure 58A. The Local certification directory provider 12 can register the user of the Windows (trade mark) certification directory provider 7 and the user of the Notes (trade mark) certification directory provider 8 in the distinguished state by
25 holding the user ID as shown in Figure 58B.

As will be described later, the Join merge provider 13A of the present invention can acquire and merge the user information and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs
5 and provide the merged information to the client in the case the same user is registered to different sub providers, without distinguishing the users by the sub providers of which use has been permitted

Also, the join merge provider 13A of the
10 present invention can certify, in the case in the case the sub provider is the provider providing the registered user information and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and further the provider that provides the
15 certification service regarding the user, can certify the user as the user of a main sub provider even in the case the sub provider certified by the log-in name and password input by the user is a sub-sub provider.

20 Thus, by using the user ID of the main sub provider, the application 11 can handle the users in an integrated manner without managing the users of other sub providers separately.

Hereinafter, an example of the apparatus
25 mounted with the join merge provider 13A and/or the

sub providers shown in Figure 56 will be explained with reference to Figure 59.

Figure 59 shows the construction of a fusion machine 120A according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Referring to Figure 59, the fusion machine 120A includes a black-and-white line printer 15 and a color line printer 16, a hardware resource 17 such as a scanner and facsimile, a software group 20, and a fusion machine starter 50. The software group 20 is formed of an application 30 and a platform 40.

The platform 40 is constructed so as to include a control service that interprets a process request from the application 30 and issues an acquisition request of hardware resources, a system resource manager 43 (referred to hereinafter as with SRM) arbitrating the acquisition requests from the control services by managing one or more hardware resources, and an operating system 41 (referred to hereinafter as OS).

The control service is constructed so as to have one or more service modules such as a system control service (Referred to hereinafter as SCS) 42, an engine control service (Referred to hereinafter as ECS) 44, a memory control service (referred to

hereinafter as MCS) 45, an operation panel control
service (referred to hereinafter as OCS) 46, a Fax
control service (referred to hereinafter as FCS) 47,
a network control service (referred to hereinafter as
5 NCS) 48, a user information managing service
(referred to hereinafter as UCS) 49A, and the like.

Here, the platform 40 is constructed to
include an application program interface (referred to
hereinafter as API) that enables reception of the
10 process demand from the application 30 by a
predefined function.

The OS 41 is an operating system such as
UNIX (trade mark) and conducts parallel processing of
each of the software in the platform 40 or the
15 application 30 in parallel.

The process of SRM 43 carries out the
system control and also the control of the resources
together with the SCS 42. For example, the process of
SRM43 arbitrates and control the execution in
20 accordance with the request form an upper layer that
uses hardware resources such as the engine, which may
be a scanner part or a printer part, a memory, a hard
disk device (HDD) file, a host I/O (Centronix
interface), a network interface, an IEEE1394
25 interface, an RS 232C interface, and the like.

For example, the SRM 43 determines whether or not the requested hardware resources is available (not used by other requests), and if it is available, a notification is made to the upper layer that the requested hardware resources are available. Further, the SRM 43 carries out scheduling of using the hardware resources in response to the request from the upper class layer. For example, the SRM 43 executes the requests such as paper feeding and picture formation conducted of the printer engine, memory securing, file generation, and the like, directly.

The process of SCS42 executes the application managing such as application control, operation part control, system screen display, LED display, resource managing and an interrupt application control. The process of ECS 44 executes the engine control of the black-and-white line printer 15, color line printer 16, and the hardware resource 17.

The process of MCS 45 executes acquisition and release of the image memory, the use of the hard disk devices (HDD), and compression and decompression of image data, and the like. The process of OCS 46 executes control of the operation panel used for the

information transmission means between the operator and the main body control.

The process of FCS 47 provides the application for executing: facsimile transmission and
5 reception that uses a PSTN or ISDN network from each of the application layers of the system controller, registration/quotation of various facsimile data managed by the BKM (backup SRAM), reading of facsimile, reception and printing of facsimile,
10 fusion transmission and reception, and the like.

The process of NCS 48 provides the services that we used commonly to the applications that require a network I/O and distribute the data received from the network side by respective
15 protocols to respective applications or provide mediation at the time of transmitting the data from the application to the side of the network.

The UCS 49 manages the user information of the user and/or the group information of the group to
20 which the user belong and determines another device connected thereto via a storage device and/or a network and storing therein the user information corresponding to the request and/or the Group information of the group to which the user belongs.
25 Thereby, the UCS 49 acquires the user information of

the user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs from the foregoing another device connected via the storage device and/or the network thus determined and supplies the same to each
5 of the applications.

Further, the process of the UCS 49 provides a ~~certification~~ an authentication service of users, in addition to the managing of the user information of the user and/or the group information of the group to
10 which the user belongs.

The Join merge provider 13 and/or the other sub providers explained with reference to Figure 8 (such as the Local certification directory provider 12, for example,) are mounted on the UCS 49.

15 The application 30 carries out processing pertinent to the user service related to image formation processing, such as printer, copier, facsimile, scanner, and the like. The application 30 includes a printer application 31, which is an
20 application for the printer having a page description language (PDL, PCL) and postscript (PS) a copy application 32 for copiers, a fax application 33 for facsimiles, a scanner application 34 for scanners, a net file application 35 for network files and a
25 process inspection application 36 for process

inspection, and the like.

The fusion machine starter 50 is the part first executed upon power on of the fusion machine 120 activates the applications 30 or the platform 40.

5 For example, the fusion machine starter 50 reads out the control service or application program from the flash memory as will be described later and transfers the programs thus read out to a memory region that secured on an SRAM or an SDRAM for system activation.

10 Figure 60 shows the hardware construction of a fusion machine according to the present invention.

Referring to Figure 60, the fusion machine 120 of Figure 12 is constructed so as to include a
15 controller board 60, an operation panel 70, a fax control unit 80 (referred to hereinafter as FCU), a USB device 90, an IEEE1394 device 100, a driver I/F 101, and an engine part 110.

Here, the driver I/F101 is and I/F
20 (interface) used for reading the programs, and the like, corresponding to the Union merge provider 13 and/or the sub provider 14 from an inserted recording medium storing the programs, and the like, corresponding to the Union merge provider 13 and/or
25 the sub provider 14 and for loading to the fusion

machine 120. Here, the recording medium may be any of an SD memory card, smart media, a multimedia card, a CompactFlash (trade mark) medium, and the like.

The operation panel 70 is connected to an
5 ASIC62 of the controller board 60 directly. Further, the FCU 80, the USB device 90, the IEEE1394 device 100, the driver I/F 101 and the engine part 110 are connected to the ASIC 62 of the controller board 60 with a PCI bus (Peripheral Component Interconnect
10 bus), and the like.

The controller board 60 is constructed so as to include a CPU 61, the ASIC62, an SRAM (Static RAM) 63, an SDRAM (Synchronous DRAM) 64, a flash memory 65, and a HDD66. Thereby, the controller board
15 60 is constructed so as to connect the CPU 61, the SRAM63, the SDRAM64, the flash memory 65, the HDD66, and the like. to the ASIC62.

It should be noted that the CPU61 carries out overall control of the fusion machine 120. Thus,
20 the CPU61 activates the process of the SCS 42, the SRM 43, the ECS44, the MCS45, the OCS 46, the FCS 47 and also the NCS48 that form the platform 40 on the OS 41 and activates the printer application 31, the copy application 32, the fax application 33, the
25 scanner application 34, the net file application 35

and also the process inspection application 36 that constitute the application 30.

The ASIC 62 is an IC for image processing and includes a hardware element for image processing.
5 Further, a virtual memory region such as kernel and process are mapped in the physical memory region of the SRAM 63 and the SDRAM 64.

Hereinafter, a construction example of the UCS 49A will be explained with reference to Figures
10 61 - 63, wherein Figure 61 is a diagram for explaining the construction of the UCS.

As shown in Figure 13, the UCS 49A is formed of the Join merge provider 13 shown in Figure 56 and one or more sub providers 14.

15 By adopting the construction of Figure 61, the UCS 49A integrates the user information of the same user and/or the group information of the group to which that user belongs provided by the sub providers 14 in the Join merge provider 13A, as will
20 be described later. Thereby, it becomes possible to provide the user information of the same user and/or the group information of the group to which that user belongs to the applications 30, and the like, of the fusion machine 120A in the merged state.

25 Figure 62 is another diagram for explaining

the construction of the UCS.

As shown in Figure 62, the UCS 49A does not include the sub providers 14 and is formed of the Union merge provider 13A of Figure 56 only.

5 By taking the construction of Figure 62, it becomes possible to merge the user information of the same user and/or the group information of the group to which that user belongs and provided the sub providers 14 mounted to other devices are merged in
10 the Join merge provider 13A. Thus, it becomes possible to provide the user information of the same user and/or the group information of the group to which that user belongs to the applications 30, and the like, of the fusion machine 120A in the merged
15 state.

Figure 63 is another diagram for explaining the construction of the UCS.

As shown in Figure 63, the UCS 49A is formed of at least one sub provider 14.

20 By adopting the construction of Figure 63, it becomes possible to provide the user information of the same user and/or the group information of the group to which that user belongs in response to a request from the Union merge provider 13 mounted to
25 other devices.

In the following, explanation will be made by using the Join merge provider 13A and the sub providers 14 for simplification of the explanation.

5 [EXAMPLE 4]

Figure 64 is a functional block diagram of a Join merge provider and sub providers according to a Example 4 of a present invention.

In the Example 4, for the sake of
10 simplification of the explanation, it is assumed that the Join merge provider 13A and the sub providers 14 provide the user information of users and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs, but not provide the certification of the
15 users.

As shown in Figure 64 the Join merge provider 13A is formed of a provider I/F 130, a merge processing part 133, a sub provider calling part 134, a Merge provider XML processing part 135, a sub
20 provider registration part 136, a session managing department 137 and an integrated directory 180.

Also, the provider I/F 130 is formed of the XML processing part 131 and the UID conversion part 132.

25 The Provider I/F 130 is an interface that

connects the Join merge provider 13A to other providers and/or other applications. As will be explained later, the sub provider 14, too, has a similar provider I/F 130.

5 The XML processing part 131 analyzes the XML message transmitted from other applications or Web portals, and the like, and converts the same to a form usable by the programs in the Join merge provider 13A.

10 Conversely, the XML processing part 131 creates an XML message from the data, and the like, given from the UID conversion part 132 and transmits the same to the applications, Web portals, and the like.

15 Furthermore, it should be noted that the applications and the Web portals may be the application 30 explained with reference to Figure 59, or alternatively an applications of other fusion machine or other device connected to the fusion
20 machine 120 via a network.

 The UID conversion part 132 converts the user ID that is contained to the XML message (referred to hereinafter as UID) according to the needs.

25 In the case the UID contained in the XML

message has the construction of U: Windows (trade mark): Kana as explained with reference to Figure 7 of the conventional technology and the construction of UID inside the provider is kana, for example, the
5 UID conversion part 132 converts UID from U: Windows: Kana to Kana. Similarly, in the case the XML message is transmitted from the provider a conversion of UID from Kana to U: Windows (trade mark): kana may be conducted according to the needs.

10 Further, the merge processing part 133 merges the user information of a user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and registered to the sub providers 14 as will be described later.

15 The sub provider calling part 134 forwards the data necessary to create the XML message transmitted to the sub provider 14 to the merge provider XML processing part 135 to be described later. For example, the sub provider calling part 134
20 designates an UID and acquires the UID of the same user from the integrated directory 180 to be explained later and provides the information of the UID thus acquired to the merge provider XMP processing part 135 to be described later.

25 Further, the sub provider calling part 134

forwards the user information of a user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and acquired from the sub provider 14 through the merge provider XML processing part 135 to be
5 described later, to the merge processing part 133.

The merge provider XML processing part 135 creates the XML message on the basis of the data given from the sub provider calling part 134 and transmits the same to a designated sub provider 14.

10 Further, the merge provider XML processing part 135 receives the XML message transmitted from the sub provider 14 forwards the data contained in the XML message to the sub provider calling part 134.

It should be noted that the data about the
15 sub provider 14 to be managed is registered in the sub provider registration part 136. In the sub provider registration part 136, the identifier of the sub provider 14, the name of the sub provider 14, the managing ID of the sub provider 14, the managing
20 password of the sub provider 14, and the like are registered for each of the sub providers 14.

In the case of registering a new sub provider 14 to the Join merge provider 13A, for example, the identifier of the sub provider 14, the
25 name of the sub provider 14, the managing ID of the

sub provider 14 and the managing password of the sub provider 14 are registered to the sub provider registration part 136.

5 The session managing part 137 manages the sessions between the Union merge provider 13 and other sub providers 14 as well as other applications or the Web portal.

For example, analysis is made whether or not the XML message acquired in the XML processing part 131 included the session ticket ID 210 of the
10 valid session ticket 200, which permits the use of the Join provider 13A.

Further, the session managing part 137 acquires the session ticket ID 310 of the anonymous
15 session ticket 300 from the sub provider 14 by using the managing ID and the managing password of the sub provider 14 registered in the sub provider registration part 136.

Thereby, the session managing part 137
20 issues the session ticket 200 of the Union merge provider 13 to be described later by using the session ticket ID310, and the like, of the acquired sub provider 14.

The integrated directory 180 integrates and
25 manages the user ID (designated hereinafter as UID)

of the sub providers 14. As mentioned before, the integrated directory 180 provides the UID of the same user as the designated user to the sub provider calling part 134 in response to the request therefrom.

5 The session managing part 137 can acquire the session ticket ID 310 of the anonymous session ticket 300 also from the sub provider 14 other than the sub providers 14 in which the user has requested the creation of the session ticket 400 by using the
10 user name and the password.

Further, the integrated directory 180 can provide the same UID as the designated.

Thus, the join merge provider 13A can acquire the user information of the same user and/or
15 the group information of the group to which that user belongs from a different sub provider 14 by using the UID.

Figure 65 is a concept diagram for explaining the structure of the session ticket of the
20 Join merge provider.

As shown in Figure 65, the session ticket 200 of the Join merge provider 13A has the structure including the session ticket ID 210, the provider type, the provider name for public release, one or
25 more sub provider names, the session ticket 300 of

one or more sub providers and/or a session ticket 400.

Here, the session ticket ID 210 is the identifier that distinguishes the current session ticket, while the provider type is the type of the providers, which may be "Join Merge", and the like.

The public released provider name is the name of the public released Union merge provider 13, which may be "Join Merge 1".

The sub provider name is the names of one or more registered sub providers 14. It should be noted that the session ticket 300 and/or the session ticket 400 of the foregoing one or more registered sub providers 14 and the Join merge provider 13A are stored in the session ticket of the sub provider.

Further, the session ticket 400 is the session ticket of the sub provider 14 issued based on the user name and the password input by the user, while the session ticket 300 is the session ticket of the sub provider 14 issued based on the managing ID and the managing password under authority of the manager and stored in the sub provider registration part 136.

In the description hereinafter, it is assumed for the sake of simplicity of explanation that the anonymous session ticket 300 is the only

session ticket of the sub provider 14 contained in the session ticket 200 of the Union merge provider 13.

By providing the hierarchical structure shown in Figure 65, the sub provider 14 can become
5 the Join merge provider 13A.

Further, while explanation has been made in Figure 65 by using the example in which the session ticket 300 and/or the session ticket 400 for the one or more registered sub providers 14 and the Join
10 merge provider 13A are stored in the session ticket of the sub provider, it is also possible that the session ticket 300 and/or the session ticket 400 are stored in the decoded form.

The sub provider 14 of Figure 16 is formed
15 of a provider I/F 130, a directory operation wrapper 141 and a session managing part 142.

The directory operation wrapper 141 modifies the data inside the sub provider 14 into the data capable of manipulating the user information
20 held in the user information saving part 152 of the directory 150 or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and held in the group information saving part 153, and acquires the user information or the group information of the group to
25 which the user belongs from the directory 150.

Further, it converts the acquired user information or the group information into the data possible to be processed inside the sub provider 14.

An example of modification of the data of
5 the directory operation wrapper 141 will be explained later by using Figure 18.

The session managing part 142 manages the sessions between the sub providers 14 and the Join merge provider 13A.

10 For example, the session managing part 142 analyzes whether or not session ticket ID 310 of the valid session ticket 300 that permits the use of the sub provider 14 is included in the XML message acquired in the XML processing part 131.

15 Further, the session managing part 142 issued the anonymous session ticket 300 when it receives the issue request of the anonymous session ticket 300 that contains the managing ID and the managing password from the Union merge provider 13
20 via the provider I/F 130.

Further, the session managing part 142 gives the session ticket ID 310 of the anonymous session ticket 300 thus issued to the provider I/F 130, and transmits the issue response of the
25 anonymous session ticket 300 including the session

ticket ID 310 to the Join merge provider 13A.

Further, the directory 150 of Figure 16 contains the user information saving part 152 and the group information saving part 153.

5 The user information saving part 152 holds the user information of the user registered in the sub provider 14. For example, the UID, the user name, the user password, and the like, are held in the user information saving part 152.

10 Further, the group information registered to the sub provider 14 is held in the group information saving part 153. For example, the group information saving part 153 holds the group ID, the group name, the membership of the group, and the like.

15 Figures 66A and 66B are diagrams explaining modification of data in the directory operation wrapper.

 Figure 66A is an example of modifying the data inside the sub provider 14 to the data capable
20 of manipulating the user information held in the user information saving part 152 and the group information of the group to which the user belongs and held in the information saving part 153 of the directory 150.

 Figure 66B is an example of modifying the
25 date of the user information held in the user

information saving part 152 of the directory 150 or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and held in the group information saving part 153 to the data capable of processing in the sub
5 provider 14.

Figure 67 is a flowchart showing an example of the acquisition processing of the group to which the user belongs in the Join merge provider.

In the following, the application or Web
10 portal that transmits the acquisition request of the group information for the group to which the user belongs to the Join merge provider 13A will be referred to as simply the client for the sake of simplicity of explanation.

15 In the step S20A, the XML processing part 131 of the Join merge provider 13A receives the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs from the client.

The example of the group acquisition
20 request from the client to the Union merge provider 13 will be describes later with reference to Figure 69.

After the step S20A, the process proceeds to the step S21A, and the session managing part 137
25 determines whether or not the session ticket ID 210

of the session ticket 200 of the Join merge provider 13A contained in the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and received in the step S20A, is a valid session ticket ID 210.

5 When it is determined that the session ticket is the session ticket ID210 of the valid session ticket 200 ((YES in step S21A), the process proceeds to the step S22A, while when it is determined that the session ticket is the session
10 ticket ID 210 of an invalid session ticket 200 (NO in step S21A), the process proceeds to the step S27A.

 In the step S22A, the sub provider calling part 134 acquires the UID of a user in the sub provider 14, the user being the same user whose UID
15 is included in the acquisition request for the user group received in the step S20A from the integrated directory 180.

 Following the step S22A, the process proceeds to the step S23A, and the sub provider
20 calling part 134 acquires the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of all the sub providers 14 included in session ticket 200 of the join merge provider 13A and the sub provider names from the session managing part 137.

25 After the step S23A, the process proceeds

to the step S24A, and the merge provider XML processing part 135 issues the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs, to each of the sub providers 14 including the UID and the session
5 ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of the sub providers 14 acquired through the sub provider calling part 134, and transmits the same to each of the sub providers 14.

The example of the group acquisition
10 request from the Union merge provider 13 to each of the sub providers 14 will be described later with reference to Figures 70A - 70C, 71A - 71C and 72A - 72C.

After the step S24A, the process proceeds
15 to the step S25A and the sub provider calling part 134 receives the assignment group acquisition response responding to the acquisition request of the groups to which the user belongs, from each of the sub providers 14 via the merge provider XML
20 processing part 135.

The example of the group acquisition response from the sub providers 14 to the Join merge provider 13A will be described later with reference to Figure 71A - 71C.

25 After the step S25A, the process proceeds

to the step S26A, and the sub provider calling part 134 determines whether or not the group information of the groups to which the designated user belongs is included in the assignment group acquisition
5 responses from the sub providers 14 that have received the response in the step S24A.

When it is determined that even one piece of assignment group information of the user is contained (YES in step S26A), the process proceeds to
10 the step S28A, while when it is determined that there is not even one group to which the user belongs is contained (NO in step S26A), the process proceeds to the step S27A.

In the step S27A, the XML processing part
15 131 of the Join merge provider 13A issues a response indicating that the acquisition of the groups to which the user belongs has failed, and transmits the same to the client.

In the step S28A, the merge processing part
20 133 merges the groups to which the user belongs and included to the assignment group acquisition response acquired in the step S25A from each of the sub providers 14.

After the step S28A, the process proceeds
25 to the step S29A, and the XML processing part 131 of

the Join merge provider 13A issues the assignment group acquisition response including the information of the groups to which the user belongs and merged in the step S28A, and transmits the same to the client.

5 The example of the group acquisition response from the Join merge provider 13A to the client will be described later with reference to Figures 72A - 72C.

Figure 68 is a flowchart showing the
10 example of the group acquisition process of the group to which the user belongs conducted in a sub provider.

The sub provider 14 starts the processing of the steps starting from step S30A as will be described below, when the Join merge provider 13A has
15 transmitted the acquisition request of the groups to which the user belongs to each of the sub providers 14 in the step S24A of Figure 67.

In the step S30A, the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 receives the acquisition
20 request of the group to which the user belongs from the Join merge provider 13A.

The example of the group acquisition request from the Join merge provider 13A to each of the sub providers 14 will be described later with
25 reference to Figure 70A - 70C.

Following the step S30A, the process proceeds to the step S31A, and the UID conversion part 132 of the sub provider 14 converts the UID included in the acquisition request of the group to
5 which the user belongs and received in the step S30A into the UID peculiar to the directory 150.

Following the step S31A, the process advances to the step S32A, and the session managing part 142 determines whether or not the session ticket
10 ID310 of the session ticket 300 of sub provider 14 included in the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and received in the step S30A is the session ticket ID 310 of a valid session ticket 300.

15 When it is determined that the session ticket ID 310 is a valid session ticket 300 (YES in step S32A), the process proceeds to the step S34A, while when it is determined the session ticket ID 310 is an invalid session ticket 300 (NO in step S32A),
20 the process proceeds to the step S33A.

In the step S33A, the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 issues a group acquisition response indicating that the acquisition of the group to which the user belongs has failed, and transmits
25 the same to the Join merge provider 13A.

In the step S34A, the sub provider 14 acquires the group information of the group to which the user belongs from the directory 150 through the directory operation wrapper 141.

5 After the step S34A, the process proceeds to the step S35A, and the UID conversion part 132 of the sub provider 14 converts the UID peculiar to the directory 150 into an UID available in the Join merge provider 13A.

10 Following the step S35A, the process proceeds to the step S36A, and the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 issues the group acquisition response including the information of the group to which the user belongs and transmits the
15 same to the Join merge provider 13A.

The example of the group acquisition response from each sub provider 14 to the Join merge provider 13A will be described later with reference to Figure 73A - 73C.

20 Furthermore, the step S25 of Figure 67 receives the group acquisition response transmitted in the step S33A or step S36A of Figure 68.

Figure 69 shows an example of the XML message of the group acquisition request from the
25 client to the Join merge provider.

As shown in Figure 69, the group acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and sent from the client to the Union merge provider 13 includes the session ticket ID 210 of the session ticket 200 of the Join merge provider 13A in the tag of <session Ticket></session Ticket>. Further, the UID identifying the user is contained in the tag of <Id></id>.

The join merge provider 13A receives the group acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and contains the UID and the session ticket ID210 of the session ticket 200 of the join merge provider 13A from the client.

Figures 70A - 70C show the examples of the XML messages of the group acquisition request from the Join merge provider to the Local directory provider 160, which is one of the sub providers 14.

Figure 70A is the XML message of a group acquisition request sent to the Local directory provider 160, which is one of the sub providers 14, from the Join merge provider 13A.

As shown in Figure 70A, the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and transmitted from the Join merge provider 13A to the Local directory provider 160 includes, in the tag of

<session Ticket></session Ticket>, the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of the Local directory provider 160.

Also, in the tag of <Id></id>, the UID that
5 identifies the user is contained. This UID is the one similar to the UID included in the XML message of Figure 69.

Figure 70B is the XML message of a group acquisition request transmitted to the Local
10 directory provider 160, which is one of the sub providers 14, from the Join merge provider 13A.

As shown in Figure 70B, the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and transmitted from the Join merge provider 13A to the
15 Local directory provider 160 includes the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of the WinNT4 directory provider 161 in the tag of <Session Ticket></session Ticket>.

Further, in the tag <Id></id>, an UID that
20 identifies the user is included. It should be noted that this UID is the one of the UIDs that the Join merge provider 13 has acquired from the integrated directory 180 based on the UID included in the XML message of Figure 69.

25 Figure 70C is the XML message of a group

acquisition request transmitted to the Local directory provider 160, which is one of the sub providers 14, from the Join merge provider 13A.

As shown in Figure 70C, the acquisition
5 request of the group to which the user belongs and transmitted from the Join merge provider 13A to the Local directory provider 160 includes the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of the Local directory provider 160 in the tag <session
10 Ticket></session Ticket>.

Further, the UID identifying the user is included in the tag <id></id>. This UID is the one similar to the UID that the Join merge provider 13A has acquired from the integrated directory 180 based
15 on the UID included in the XML message of Figure 69.

Because the Join merge provider 13A manages the session ticket with the hierarchical structure as explained it in Figure 65, it becomes possible to acquire the session ticket ID 310 of the session
20 ticket 300 of the Local directory provider 160 forming the sub providers 14 based on the session ticket ID 210 of the session ticket 200 of the Join merge provider 13A contained in the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and
25 transmitted from the client, and to include the

session ticket ID310 in the respective XML messages.

Because the Join merge provider 13A manages the UID of the users in the sub providers 14 integrally in the integrated directory 180, it becomes possible to acquire the UID of the same user from the integrated directory 180 based on the UID included in the user group acquisition request and include the UID thus acquired in the XML message.

Figures 71A - 71C show examples of the XML message of a group acquisition request from the Join merge provider to the WinNT4 directory provider, which is one of the sub providers.

Figure 71A is the XML message of a group acquisition request from the Join merge provider 13A to the WinNT4 directory provider 161, which is one of the sub providers 14.

As shown in Figure 71A, the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and transmitted from the Join merge provider 13A to the WinNT4 directory provider 161 includes the session ticket ID310 of the session ticket 300 of the WinNT4 directory provider 161 in the tag <sessionTicket>,</sessionTicket>.

Further, the tag <id>,</id> includes the UID for identifying the user. This UID is similar to the

UID included in the XML message of Figure 69.

Figure 71B is another diagram showing the XML message of a group acquisition request transmitted from the Join directory provider 13A to, 5 the WinNT4 directory provider 161, which is one of the sub providers 14.

As shown in Figure 23B, the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and transmitted from the Join merge provider 13A to the 10 WinNT4 directory provider 161 contains the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of the WinNT4 directory provider 161 in the tag <sessionTicket></sessionTicket>.

Further, the tag <id></id> contains the UID 15 identifying the user. This UID is one of the UIDs of the same user that the Join merge provider 13 has acquired from the integrated directory 180 based on the UID included in the XML message of Figure 69.

Figure 71C is another diagram showing the 20 XML message of a group acquisition request transmitted from the Join merge provider 13A to the WinNT4 directory provider 161, which is one of the sub providers 14.

As shown in Figure 71C, the group 25 acquisition request of the group to which the user

belongs from the Join merge provider 13A to the WinNT4 directory provider 161 includes the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of the WinNT4 directory provider 161 in the tag

5 <sessionTicket></sessionTicket>.

Further, the tag <id></id> includes the UID identifying the user. It should be noted that this UID is one of the UIDs that the Join merge provider 13A has acquired from the integrated directory based
10 on the UID included in the XML message of Figure 69.

Because the Join merge provider 13A manages the session ticket with the hierarchical structure as explained it in Figure 65, it becomes possible to acquire the session ticket ID 310 of the session
15 ticket 300 of the WinNT4 directory provider 161 constituting the sub providers 14 based on the session ticket ID 210 of the session ticket 200 of the Join merge provider 13A contained in the acquisition request of the group to which the user
20 belongs and transmitted from the client, and to include the session ticket ID 310 in the respective XML messages.

Because the Join merge provider 13A manages the UID of the users in the sub providers 14
25 integrally in the integrated directory 180, it

becomes possible to acquire the UID of the same user from the integrated directory 180 based on the UID included in the user group acquisition request and include the UID thus acquired in the XML message.

5 Figures 72A - 72C show examples of the XML message of a group acquisition request from the Join merge provider to the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider, which is one of the sub providers.

Figure 72A is the XML message of a group
10 acquisition request from the Join merge provider 13A to the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 162, which is one of the sub providers 14.

As shown in Figure 72A, the acquisition
request of the group to which the user belongs and
15 transmitted from the Join merge provider 13A to the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 162 includes the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of the Notes (trademark) R5 directory provider 162 in the tag <sessionTicket>,</sessionTicket>.

20 Further, the tag <id>,</id> includes the UID for identifying the user. This UID is similar to the UID included in the XML message of Figure 69.

Figure 72B is another diagram showing the
XML message of a group acquisition request
25 transmitted from the Join directory provider 13A to

the Notes (trademark) R5 directory provider 162,
which is one of the sub providers 14.

As shown in Figure 72B, the acquisition
request of the group to which the user belongs and
5 transmitted from the Join merge provider 13A to the
Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 162 contains
the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300
of the Notes (trade mark) directory provider 162 in
the tag <sessionTicket></sessionTicket>.

10 Further, the tag <id></id> contains the UID
identifying the user. This UID is on eof the UIDs of
the same user that the Join merge providre 13 has
acquired from the integrated directory 180 based on
the UID included in the XML message of Figure 69.

15 Figure 72C is another diagram showing the
XML message of a group acquisition request
transmitted from the Join merge provider 13A to the
Notes (trade mark) directory provider 162, which is
one of the sub providers 14.

20 As shown in Figure 72C, the group
acquisition request of the group to which the user
belongs from the Join merge provider 13A to the Notes
(trade mark) directory provider 162 includes the
session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of
25 the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 162 in

the tag <sessionTicket></sessionTicket>.

Further, the tag <id></id> includes the UID identifying the user. It should be noted that this UID is one of the UIDs that the Join merge provider
5 13A has acquired from the integrated directory based on the UID included in the XML message of Figure 69.

Because the Join merge provider 13A manages the session ticket with the hierarchical structure as explained it in Figure 65, it becomes possible to
10 acquire the session ticket ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 162 constituting the sub providers 14 based on the session ticket ID 210 of the session ticket 200 of the Join merge provider 13A contained in the
15 acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and transmitted from the client, and to include the session ticket ID 310 in the respective XML messages.

Because the Join merge provider 13A manages
20 the UID of the users in the sub providers 14 integrally in the integrated directory 180, it becomes possible to acquire the UID of the same user from the integrated directory 180 based on the UID included in the user group acquisition request and
25 include the UID thus acquired in the XML message.

Figures 73A - 73C are the XML messages of a group acquisition response from the Local directory provider, which is one of the sub providers, to the Join merge provider.

5 Figures 73A - 73C show the examples of the XML messages of the group acquisition response to the join merge provider from the Local directory provider, which is one of the sub providers.

Figure 73A is the XML message of a group
10 acquisition response to the request of Figure 70A.

In the case that the user corresponding to the designated UID is not registered in the Local directory provider 160, the Local provider 160 transmits the acquisition response shown in Figure
15 73A not having the tag <item></item> to the join merge provider 13A.

Figure 73B is the XML message of 7group acquisition response to the request of Figure 70B.

As shown in Figure 73B, in the case the
20 user corresponding to the designated UID is registered in the Local directory provider 160, the Local directory provider 160 stores the group information that this user belongs to in each of the tags <item></item> included in the tag
25 <groupList></groupList> and transmits the same to the

join merge provider 13A.

Figure 73C is the XML message of a group acquisition response to the request of Figure 70C.

Similarly to Figure 73A, in the case the
5 user corresponding to the designated UID is not
registered in the Local directory provider 160, the
Local directory provider 160 transmits the
acquisition response shown in Figure 73C not
containing the tag <item></item> to the join merge
10 provider 13A.

Figures 74A - 74C are the XML messages of
the group acquisition response to the join merge
provider from the WinNT4 directory provider, which is
one of the sub providers.

15 Figure 74A is the XML message of a group
acquisition response to the request of Figure 71A.

As shown in Figure 74A, in the case the
user corresponding to the designated UID is
registered in the WinNT4 directory provider 161m the
20 WinNT4 directory provider 161 stores the group
information that this user belongs to in each of the
tags <item></item> included in the
<groupList></groupList> and transmits the same to the
join merge provider 13A.

25 Figure 74B is the XML message of a group

acquisition response to the request of Figure 71B.

In the case that the user corresponding to the designated UID is not registered in the WinNT4 directory provider 161, the WinNT4 directory provider
5 161 transmits the acquisition response not containing the tag <item></item> as shown in Figure 74B to the join merge provider 13A.

Figure 74C is the XML message of the group acquisition response to the request of Figure 71C.

10 Similarly to Figure 74B, in the case the user corresponding to the designated UID is not registered in the WinNT4 directory provider 161, the WinNT4 directory provider 161 transmits the acquisition response not having the tag <item></item>
15 as shown in Figure 74C to the join merge provider 13A.

Figure 75A - 75C show the examples of the XML message of the group acquisition response to the join merge provider from the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider, which is one of the sub providers.

20 Figure 75A is the XML message of a group acquisition response to the request of Figure 72A.

Figure 75B is the XML message of a group acquisition response to the request of Figure 72B.

Figure 75C is the XML message of a group
25 acquisition response to the request of Figure 72 C.

In the case the user corresponding to the designated UID is not registered in the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 162, the Notes (trade mark) R5 directory provider 162 transmits the
5 acquisition response not having the tag <item></item> as shown to from Figures 75A - 75C to the join merge provider 13A.

Each sub provider 14 crates, in the case the user corresponding to the designated UID is
10 registered in that sub provider 14 as the user of this sub provider 14, the group acquisition response including the group information of the group to which this user belongs and transmits the same to the join merge provider 13A.

15 Figure 76 is the XML message of a group acquisition response from the join merge provider to the client.

As shown in Figure 76, the Join merge provider 13A stores the group information acquired
20 from each of the sub providers 14 by merging the tag <item></item> holding the group information into a single tag <groupList></groupList> and transmits the same to the client. By transmitting the acquisition request of the group to which the user belongs and
25 contains the session ticket ID 210 of the session

ticket 200 of the Join merge provider 13A and the UID identifying the user to the Join merge provider 13A, the client can acquire the information of the groups to which the same user, who is registered to the
5 respective sub providers 14, belongs and managed by the join merge provider 13A, from the join merge provider 13A.

For example, `<item>G: Local: group1</item>` and `<item>G: Local: group2</item>` of Figure 76 are
10 the information of the group to which the user 3,238,994,209 belongs, who is registered to the Local directory provider 160 as the user of the Local directory provider 160. Further, `<Item>G: WinNT4: group1</item>` and `<item>G: WinNT4: group2</item>` of
15 Figure 76 are the information of the group to which the user 3,238,994,209 belongs and registered to the WinNT4 directory provider 161 as the user of the WinNT4 directory provider 161.

Thus, the Join merge provider 13A can
20 acquire and merge the group information of the groups to which the same user belongs, from each of the sub providers 14.

While the explanation of Example 4 has been made for the case the session ticket ID 210 and/or
25 the session ticket ID 310 is transmitted and received

between the Join merge provider 13A and the sub
provider 14 or between the join merge provider 13A
and the client, the present invention is not limited
to such a case and it is possible also to transmit
5 and receive the session ticket 200 and/or the session
ticket 300.

Heretofore, the case in which that sub
provider 14 does not require the certification in the
Example 4. In the Example 5 below, the case in which
10 the sub provider requires certification will be
explained.

[Example 5]

Figure 77 is a functional block diagram of
15 the Join merge provider and the sub providers
according to Example 5 of the present invention.

In the Example 5, it is assumed that the
sub providers 14 provide not only the user
information and/or the group information of the group
20 to which the user belongs but also a ~~certification~~an
authentication service of the user.

As shown in Figure 77, the Join merge
provider 13A includes the provider I/F 130, the merge
processing part 133, the sub provider calling part
25 134, the merge provider XML processing part 135, the

sub provider registration part 136, the session managing part 137, an ID password analyzing part 138, ~~a certification~~ an authentication ticket managing part 139 and the integrated directory 180.

5 Further, the provider I/F 130 is formed of
the XML processing part 131 and the UID conversion
part 132.

As for the construction of the Join merge provider 13A of Example 5 of Figure 77, it will be noted that the ID password analyzing part 138 and the certification ticket managing part 139 are added newly to the construction of the Join merge provider 13A of Example 4 of Figure 64.

The ID password analyzing part 138 acquires
15 the ID and password contained to the issue request of
a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket 500 for
certifying the user in the Union merge provider 13
and transmitted from a client (Web portal, for
example), and forwards the same to the sub provider
20 calling part 134.

The sub provider calling part 134 forwards the ID and the password given from the ID password analyzing part 138 to the merge provider XML processing part 135 to be described later.

25 Further, in the case the sub provider 14

that has succeeded in the certification is a sub-sub provider, the sub provider calling part 134 acquires the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 from the sub-sub provider and certifying
5 the user in that sub-sub provider and transmits a confirmation request to the foregoing sub-sub provider via the merge provider XML processing part 135 as will be described later by using the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification
10 ticket 600.

Upon acquisition of the confirmation response to the confirmation request from the sub-sub provider through the merge provider XML processing part 135, the sub provider calling part 134 acquires
15 the UID of the same user who is registered to the main sub provider as the user of the main sub provider from the integrated directory 180 by using the UID of the user registered to the -mentioned sub-sub provider as the user of the sub-sub provider and
20 is included in the confirmation response.

The Sub provider calling part 134 acquires the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 certifying the user corresponding to the UID of the main sub provider thus acquired, from the
25 main sub provider via the merge provider XML

processing part 135, by using the managing ID and the managing password for acquisition of the certification ticket of the main sub provider stored in the sub provider registration part 136, provides
5 the certification ticket 600 and/or the certification ticket ID 610 thus acquired to the certification ticket managing part 139.

As compared with the Example 4, it should be noted that present example differs in the point
10 that the managing ID and the managing password for acquisition of the certification ticket of the sub provider are registered to the main sub provider registration part 136, as mentioned above.

As will be noted later, the Join merge
15 provider 13A can register the sub provider 14 as a main sub provider by registering the managing ID and managing password for acquisition of the certification ticket to the sub provider registration part 136.

20 The certification ticket managing part 139 creates and manages the certification ticket 500 certifying the user in the Join merge provider 13A based on the certification ticket 600 and/or the certification ticket ID 610 in the main sub provider
25 acquired from the main sub provider.

Also, the certification ticket managing part 139 transmits the certification ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 that certifies the user in the Join merge provider 13A thus created to the client (Web portal, for example) that has required the certification via the provider I/F130 of the Join merge provider 13A.

The Join merge provider 13A can create the certification ticket 500 that certifies the user in the Join merge provider 13A based on the certification ticket 600 and/or the certification ticket ID 610 that certifies the user of the main sub provider by conducting the certification as the user of the main sub provider, also in the case the client has requested the certification of the user of the sub-sub provider based on the user name and password, and provide the certification ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 to the client.

Figure 78 is a concept diagram for explaining the structure of the certification ticket of the Join merge provider.

As shown in Figure 78, the certification ticket 500 of the Join merge provider 13A has the certification ticket ID510, the provider type, the provider name for public release, the sub provider

name and the certification ticket 600 of the sub provider as the structure.

It should be noted that the certification ticket ID 510 is the identifier that distinguishes
5 the certification ticket. The provider type is the type of the provider, such as "Join merging".

Further, the provider name released to the public is the name of the Join merge provider 13A to be released to the public such as "Join merging 1".

10 The Sub provider name is the name of the main sub provider included in the registered sub providers 14 and succeeded in the certification and transmission of the certification ticket 600 has been made. The certification ticket of the sub provider is
15 the certification ticket 600 of the main sub provider succeeded in the certification and the transmission of the certification ticket 600 has been made.

By providing the structure of the certification ticket as shown in Figure 78 to the
20 Join merge provider 13A, the user can finish the certification in one step.

Furthermore, the certification ticket of the sub provider may include the decoded certification ticket 600 of the sub provider 14
25 succeeded in the certification and the transmission

of the certification ticket 600 has been made.

Figure 79 is a concept diagram of the data managed in the integrated directory.

As shown in Figure 79, the integrated
5 directory 180 integrally manages the UID of the main
sub provider and the UID of one or more sub-sub
providers and further the certification ticket of the
main sub provider.

By integrally managing the data as shown in
10 Figure 79, the integrated directory 180 can provide
the UID of the same user.

Hereinafter, the process of creating the
certification ticket in the Join merge provider 13A
will be explained for the case in which the user name
15 and the password registered to the sub-sub provider
are contained as the user of the sub-sub provider in
the certification ticket issue request from the
client with reference to Figure 80.

Figure 80 is the flowchart of a—
20 ~~certification~~ an authentication ticket creation
processing in the Join merge provider.

In the step S40A, the XML processing part
131 of Join merge provider 13A receives the issue
request of certification ticket 500 for certifying
25 the user in the Join merge provider 13A from the

client (Web portal, for example).

The example of the certification ticket issue request from the client (Web portal, for example) to the Join merge provider 13A will be
5 described later with reference to Figure 83.

Following the step S40A, the process proceeds to the step S41A, and the ID password analyzing part 138 gives the user name and password included to the issue request of the certification
10 ticket received from the client (Web portal, for example) in the step S40A to the sub provider calling part 134.

Following the step S41A, the process proceeds to the step S42A, and the sub provider
15 calling part 134 acquires the list of the sub providers 14 registered in the sub provider registration part 136.

Following the step S42A, the process proceeds to the step S43A, and the merge provider XML
20 processing part 135 crates the issue request of the certification ticket 600 for certifying the user in the sub provider 14 and containing the ID and password acquired via the sub provider calling part 134 and transmits the same to each of the sub
25 providers 14 registered to the list of the sub

providers 14.

The example of the certification ticket issue request from the Join merge provider 13A to the sub provider 14 will be described later with
5 reference to Figure 84.

Following the step S43A, the process proceeds to the step S44A, and the sub provider calling part 134 receives the certification ticket issue response to the issue request for the
10 certification ticket 600 from the sub-sub provider via the merge provider XML processing part 135.

The example of the certification ticket issue response from the sub-sub provider to the Join merge provider 13A will be explained later with
15 reference to Figure 85.

Following the step S44A, the process proceeds to the step S45A, and the sub provider calling part 134 determines whether or not the certification ticket ID 610 that distinguishes the
20 certification ticket 600 is included in the certification ticket issue response received from the sub-sub provider in the step S44A.

When it is determined that the certification ticket ID 610 that distinguishes the
25 certification ticket 600 is included in the

certification ticket issue response (YES in step S45A), the process proceeds to the step S46A, while when it is determined that the certification ticket ID 610 that distinguishes the certification ticket 600 is not contained (NO in the step S45A), the process proceeds to the step S54A.

In the Step S46A, the merge provider XML processing part 135 crates the certification ticket ID confirmation request including the certification ticket ID 610 by using the certification ticket ID 610 distinguishing the certification ticket 600 and contained in the certification ticket issue response acquired via the sub provider calling part 134 and transmits the to the sub-sub provider that has transmitted the certification ticket issue response.

The example of the certification ticket ID confirmation request from the Join merge provider 13A to the sub provider 14 will be described later with reference to Figure 86.

Following the step S46A, the process proceeds to the step S47A, and the Sub provider calling part 134 receives the confirmation response of the certification ticket ID 610 from the sub-sub provider that has transmitted the certification ticket ID confirmation request, via merge provider

XML processing part 135.

The example of the certification ticket ID confirmation response from the sub-sub provide to the Join merge provider 13A will be described later with
5 reference to Figure 87.

Following the step S47A, the process proceeds to the step S48A, and the sub provider calling part 134 determines whether or not the user information is included in the confirmation response
10 of the certification ticket ID 610 received in the step S47A.

When it is determined that the user information is contained (YES in step S48A), the process proceeds to the step S49A, while when it
15 is determined that the user information is not contained (NO in step S48A), the process proceeds to the step S54A.

In the step S49A, the sub provider calling part 134 acquires the UID of the main sub provider
20 for the same user from than integrated directory 180 by using the UID included in the certification ticket ID confirmation response from the sub-sub provider acquired in the step S47A.

Following the step S49A, the process
25 proceeds to the step S50A and the sub provider

calling part 134 acquires the managing ID and the managing password for acquisition of the certification ticket of the main sub provider from the sub provider registration part 136.

5 Following the step S50A, the process proceeds to the step S51A and the merge provider XML processing part 135 creates the issue request for the certification ticket 600 certifying the user corresponding to the UID of the main sub provider and
10 containing the managing ID and the managing password , which have been acquired via the sub provider calling part 134, for acquisition of the certification ticket of the main sub provider, and transmits the same to the main sub provider.

15 The example of the certification ticket issue request from the Join merge provider 13A to the main sub provider will be describes later with reference to Figure 88.

 Following the step S51A, the process
20 proceeds to the step S52A, and the sub provider calling part 134 receives the certification ticket issue response to the issue request for the certification ticket 600 from the main sub provider that has transmitted the certification ticket issue
25 request via the merge provider XML processing part

135.

The example of the certification ticket issue response from the main sub provider to the Join merge provider 13A will be described later with
5 reference to Figure 89.

Following the step S52A, the process proceeds to the step S53, and the sub provider calling part 134 determines whether or not the certification ticket ID 610 that distinguishes the
10 certification ticket 600 is included in the certification ticket issue response from the main sub provider received in the step S52A.

In the case it is determined that the certification ticket ID 610 distinguishing the
15 certification ticket 600 is included in the certification ticket issue response, (YES in step S53A), the process proceeds to the step S55A, while when it is determined that the certification ticket ID 610 that distinguishes the certification ticket
20 600 is not contained (NO in step S53A), the process proceeds to the step S54A.

In the step S54A, the XML processing part 131 of the Join merge provider 13A creates the response indicating that the creation of the
25 certification ticket 500 has failed and transmits the

same to the client (Web portal for example).

In the Step S55A, the certification ticket managing part 139 creates the certification ticket 500 that certifies the user in the Join merge provider 13A as explained in Figure 78 by using the
5 certification ticket ID610 of the main sub provider.

Following the step S55A, the process proceeds to the step S56A, and the XML processing part 131 of the Join merge provider 13A creates the
10 certification ticket issue response including the certification ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 created in the step S55A and transmits to the client (Web portal for example).

The example of the certification ticket issue response from the Join merge provider 13A to
15 the client (Web portal, for example) will be explained later with reference to Figure 90.

Figure 81 is the flowchart of certification ticket creation process in a sub provider.

20 The sub provider 14 starts the processing from the step S60A as shown below when the Join merge provider 13A has transmitted the issue request for the certification ticket 600 that certifies the user in the sub provider 14 in the step S43A or step S51A
25 of Figure 80 to the sub provider 14

In the step S60A, the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 receives the issue request of the certification ticket 600 that certifies the user in the sub provider 14 from the Join merge
5 provider 13A.

As noted before, the example of the certification ticket issue request from the Join merge provider 13A to the sub provider 14 will be described later by using Figure 84. Further, the
10 example of the certification ticket issue request from the Join merge provider 13A to the main sub provider will be described later with reference to Figure 88.

Following the step S60A, the process
15 proceeds to the step S61A, and the ID password analyzing part 143 determines whether or not the user name and the password included in the issue request of the certification ticket 600 received in the step S60A is a valid combination, by confirming
20 with the directory 150 through the directory operation wrapper 141.

When it is determined the combination a valid combination (YES in step S61A),
the process proceeds to the step S63A, while when it
25 is determined that the combination is not a valid

combination (NO in step S61A), the process proceeds to the step S62A.

In the step S62A, the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 creates the certification ticket issue response indicating that the creation of
5 the certification ticket 600 has failed and it transmits the same to the Join merge provider 13A.

In the step S63A, the certification ticket managing part 144 acquires the user information
10 corresponding to the user name and the password from the directory 150 via the directory operation wrapper 141.

Following the step S63A, the process proceeds to the step S64A, and the certification
15 ticket managing part 144 creates the certification ticket 600 that certifies the user in the sub provider 14.

Following the step S64A, the process proceeds to the step S65A, and the XML processing
20 part 131 of the sub provider 14 creates the certification ticket issue response including the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 created in the step S64A and transmits the same to the Join merge provider 13A.

25 As we noted before, the example of the

certification ticket issue response from the sub-sub provider to the Join merge provider 13A will be described later with reference to Figure 85 and the example of the certification ticket issue response
5 from a main sub provider to the Join merge provider 13A will be described later with reference to Figure 89.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the step S44A and/or step S52A of Figure 80 receives the
10 certification ticket issue response transmitted in the step S62A or step S65A of Figure 81.

Figure 82 is the flowchart of a ~~certification~~ an authentication ticket ID confirmation processing in a sub provider.

15 Sub provider 14 starts the processing from the step S70A shown below when the Join merge provider 13A has transmitted the confirmation request of the certification ticket ID 610 to the sub provider 14 in the step S46A of Figure 80 and the
20 step S84A of Figure 91 to be described later.

In the step S70A, the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 receives the confirmation request of the certification ticket ID 610 from the Join merge provider 13A.

25 The example of the certification ticket ID

confirmation request from the Join merge provider 13A to the sub-sub provider will be described later with reference to Figure 86. Also, the example of the certification ticket ID confirmation request from the
5 Join merge provider 13A to the main sub provider will be described later with reference to Figure 93.

Following the step S70A, the process proceeds to the step S71A and the UID conversion part 132 of the sub provider 14 converts the UID included
10 in the confirmation request of the certification ticket ID 610 received in the step S70A into the UID pertinent to the directory 150.

Following the step S71A, the process proceeds to the step S72A and the certification
15 ticket managing part 144 determines whether or not the certification ticket ID 610 included in the confirmation request of the certification ticket ID 610 received in the step S70A is the certification ticket ID610 of a valid certification ticket 600.

20 When it is determined that it is the certification ticket ID 610 of a valid certification ticket 600 (YES in step S72A), the process proceeds to the step S74A, while when it is determined it is the certification ticket ID 610 of an invalid
25 certification ticket 600 (NO in step S72A), the

process proceeds to the step S73A.

In the step S73A, the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 creates the certification ticket ID confirmation response indicating that the
5 confirmation of the certification ticket ID 610 has failed and transmits the same to the Join merge provider 13A.

In the step S74, the sub provider 14 acquires the user information from the directory 150
10 through the directory operation wrapper 141.

Following the step S74A, the process proceeds to the step S75A and the UID conversion part 132 of the sub provider 14 converts the UID peculiar to the directory 150 into the UID available for the
15 Join merge provider 13A.

Following the step S75A, the process proceeds to the step S76A and the XML processing part 131 of the sub provider 14 creates the certification ticket ID confirmation response including the user
20 information acquired in the step S74A and transmits the same to the Join merge provider 13A.

The example of the certification ticket ID confirmation response from the sub-sub provider to the Join merge provider 13A will be described later
25 with reference to Figure 87. Also, the example of the

certification ticket ID confirmation response from the main sub provider to the Join merge provider 13A will be described later by using Figure 94.

It should be noted that the step S47A of Figure 80
5 and/or the step S85A of Figure 91 to be described later receives the certification ticket ID confirmation response transmitted in the step S73A or step S76A of Figure 82.

Figure 83 is the XML message of the example
10 of a ~~certification~~ an authentication ticket issue request from the client to the Join merge provider.

As shown in Figure 83, the issue request of certification ticket 500 from the client (Web portal for example) to the Join merge provider 13A includes
15 the user name in the tag < Name></Name> and the password corresponding to the user name in the tag <passwd></passwd>.

The Join merge provider 13A receives the issue request of the certification ticket 500 that
20 contains the user name and password from the client (Web portal for example).

Figure 84 is the XML message of a ~~certification~~ an authentication ticket issue request from the Join merge provider to the sub provider.

25 As shown in Figure 84, the Join merge

provider 13A transmits the issue request of the certification ticket 600 certifying the user in the sub provider 14 and containing the user name and password included in the issue request of the

5 certification ticket 500 transmitted from the client (Web portal, for example) as it is, to the sub provider 14.

Figure 85 is the XML message of a ~~certification~~ an authentication ticket issue response

10 to the Join merge provider from the sub-sub provider.

As shown in Figure 85, the certification ticket issue response to the Join merge provider 13A from the sub-sub provider includes the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 created

15 in the sub-sub provider in the tag <authTicket></authTicket>.

When the certification has been succeeded, the sub-sub provider creates the certification ticket 600 that certifies the user in the sub-sub provider

20 and the certification ticket issue response including the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 and transmits the same to the Join merge provider 13A.

Figure 86 is the XML message of a ~~certification~~ an authentication ticket ID confirmation

25

request from the Join merge provider to the sub-sub provider.

As shown in Figure 86, the certification ticket ID confirmation request from the Join merge provider 13A to the sub-sub provider includes the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 that certifies the user in the sub-sub provider acquired from the sub-sub provider shown in Figure 85 in the tag <authTicket></authTicket>.

Figure 87 is the XML message of a ~~certification~~ an authentication ticket ID confirmation response to the Join merge provider from the sub-sub provider.

As shown in Figure 87, the confirmation response of certification ticket ID 610 to the Join merge provider 13A from the sub-sub provider includes the name of the user in the tag <name></name>, the UID that distinguishes the user in the tag <id></id>, and the group information of group to which the user registered as the user belongs and included in the tag <id></id> of that sub-sub provider, which in turn is included in the tag < groupList></groupList>.

The sub-sub provider acquires the user information and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs from the directory 150 and

transmits the same to the Join merge provider 13A.

Figure 88 is the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket issue request from the Join merge provider to the main sub provider.

5 As shown in Figure 88, the issue request of the certification ticket 600 from the Join merge provider 13A to the main sub provider includes the managing ID for the certification ticket acquisition in the tag <Name></Name> and the managing password
10 for the certification ticket acquisition in the tag <passwd></passwd>.

 The Join merge provider 13A transmits the issue request of the certification ticket 600 that certifies the user corresponding to the UID of the
15 main sub provider and includes the managing ID and managing password for the certification ticket acquisition of the main sub provider stored in the sub provider registration part 136, to the main sub provider.

20 Figure 89 is the XML message of a ~~certification~~an authentication ticket issue response to the Join merge provider from the main sub provider.

 As shown in Figure 89, the certification ticket issue response from the main sub provider to
25 the Join merge provider 13A includes the

certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 created in the main sub provider in the tag < authTicket></authTicket>.

The main sub provider creates the
5 certification ticket 600 that certifies the user in the sub-sub provider when the certification has succeeded and transmits the certification ticket issue response including the certification ticket ID 610 of that certification ticket 600 to the Join
10 merge provider 13A.

Figure 90 is the XML message of a ~~certification~~ authentication ticket issue response from the Join merge provider to the client.

As shown in Figure 90 the certification
15 ticket issue response to the client (Web portal, for example) from Join merge provider 13A includes the certification ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 created in the Join merge provider 13A in the tag <authTicket></authTicket>.

20 The Join merge provider 13A creates the certification ticket 500 that certifies the user in the Join merge provider 13A explained in Figure 78 when the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 created in the main sub
25 provider is acquired from the main sub provider as we

explained it in Figure 89, and transmits the certification ticket issue response including the certification ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 to the client (Web portal, for example).

5 Hereinafter, the processing of the Join merge provider 13A and the sub provider 14 for the case the confirmation request of the certification ticket ID 510 transmitted it in the certification ticket issue response has been transmitted from the
10 client (application, for example).

Figure 91 is the flowchart of a—
~~certification~~an authentication ticket ID confirmation processing in the Join merge provider.

In the Step S80A, the XML processing part
15 131 of the Join merge provider 13A receives the confirmation request of the certification ticket ID 510 from the client (application, for example).

The example of the certification ticket ID confirmation request from the client (application for
20 example) to the Join merge provider 13A will be described later by using Figure 92.

Following the step S80A, the process proceeds to the step S81A, and the certification ticket managing part 139 acquires the certification
25 ticket ID 510 included in the confirmation request of

the certification ticket ID 510 received it the step S80A.

Following the step S81A, the process proceeds to the step S82A, and the certification
5 ticket managing part 139 determines whether or not the certification ticket ID 510 acquired in the step S81A is a valid certification ticket ID 510.

When it is determined it is the valid certification ticket ID 510 (YES in step S82A), the
10 process proceeds to the step S83A, while when it is determined it is not the valid certification ticket ID 510 (NO in step S82A), the process proceeds to the step S87A.

In the Step S83A, the certification ticket
15 managing part 139 gives the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 of the main sub provider included in the certification ticket 500 of the Join merge provider 13A and the sub provider name of the main sub provider to the sub provider calling
20 part 134.

Following the step S83A, the process proceeds to the step S84A and the merge provider XML processing part 135 creates the certification ticket ID confirmation request including the certification
25 ticket ID 610 to the main sub provider, by using

certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 of the main sub provider acquired via the sub provider calling part 134, and transmits the same to the main sub provider.

5 The example of the certification ticket ID confirmation request from the Join merge provider 13A to the main sub provider will be described later by using Figure 93.

 Following the step S84, the process
10 proceeds to the step S85 and the sub provider calling part 134 receives the confirmation response of the certification ticket ID 610 from the main sub provider via the merge provider XML processing part 135.

15 The example of the certification ticket ID confirmation response to the Join merge provider 13A from the main sub provider will be described later. by using Figure 94.

 Following the step S85A, the process
20 proceeds to the step S86A and the sub provider calling part 134 determines whether or not the user information is included in the confirmation response of the certification ticket ID 610 received in the step S85A.

25 When it is determined that the user

information is contained (YES in step S86A), the process proceeds to the step S88A, while when it is determined that the user information is not contained (NO in step S86A), the process proceeds to the step
5 S87A.

In the step S87A, the XML processing part 131 of the Join merge provider 13A creates the response indicating that the confirmation of the certification ticket ID 510 has failed and transmits
10 the same to the client (application for example).

In the step S88A, the sub provider calling part 134 acquires, by using the UID, which is the distinction information distinguishing the users contained in the user information and acquired in the
15 step S86A, the UID of the same user from the integrated directory.

Following the step S88A, the process proceeds to the step S89A and the sub provider calling part 134 acquires the session ticket ID 310
20 of the session ticket 300 of each of the sub providers 14 managed in the session managing part 137 and the sub provider name.

Following the step S89A, the process proceeds to the step S90A, and the merge provider XML
25 processing part 135 acquires the UID identifying the

user and the session ticket ID 310 of the session
ticket 300 of the sub provider 14 from the sub
provider calling part 134, and creates the
acquisition request of the group to which the user
5 belongs and transmits the same to each of the sub
providers 14 as explained in Example 4.

Following the step S90A, the process
proceeds to the step S91A and the sub provider
calling part 134 receives the group acquisition
10 response to the acquisition request of the group from
each of the sub providers 14 via the merge provider
XML processing part 135.

Following the step S91A, the process
proceeds to the step S92A, and the merge processing
15 part 133 merges the user information acquired in the
step S85A and the group information of the group to
which the user belongs, the user being the one
contained in the group acquisition response acquired
in step the S91A.

20 Following the step S92A, the process
proceeds to the step S93A and the XML processing part
131 of the Join merge provider 13A creates the
certification ticket ID confirmation response
including the user information and the group
25 information of the group to which the use belongs and

merged in the step S92A and transmits the same to the client (application, for example)

The example of the certification ticket ID confirmation response from the Join merge provider 13A to the client will be describes later by using Figure 95.

Figure 92 is the XML message of a ~~certification~~ an authentication ticket ID confirmation request from the client to the Join merge provider.

As shown in Figure 92, the certification ticket ID confirmation request to from the client (application, for example) to the Join merge provider 13A includes the certification ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 that certifies the user in the Join merge provider 13A in the tag <authTicket></authTicket>.

The Join merge provider 13A receives the confirmation request of the certification ticket ID 510 that includes the certification ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 and certifies the user in the Join merge provider 13A from the client (application, for example).

Figure 93 is the XML message of a ~~certification~~ an authentication ticket ID confirmation request from the Join merge provider to the main sub

provider.

As shown in Figure 93, the certification ticket ID confirmation request from the Join merge provider 13A to the main sub provider includes the
5 certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 that certifies the user in the main sub provider in the tag <authTicket></authTicket>.

Because the Join merge provider 13A manages the certification ticket 600 of the main sub provider
10 in the form included in the certification ticket 500 of that Join merge provider 13A, as explained in Figure 78, it is possible to acquire the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 of the main sub provider based on the
15 certification ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 of the Join merge provider 13A included in the certification ticket confirmation request transmitted from the client (application, for example) and include this certification ticket ID 610
20 to the XML message.

Figure 94 is the XML message of a—
~~certification~~an authentication ticket ID confirmation response from the main sub provider to the Join merge provider.

25 As shown in Figure 94, the confirmation

response of the certification ticket ID 610 from the main sub provider to the Join merge provider 13A includes the name of the user in the tag <name></name>, the UID of the user registered to the main sub provider as the user of the main sub provider in the tag <id></id>, and the group information of the group in the main sub provider to which the user belongs in each of the tags <item></item> included in the tag <groupList></groupList>.

The main sub provider acquires the user information and the group information of the group to which that user belong from the directory 150 and transmits the same to the Join merge provider 13A.

Figure 95 is the XML message of a ~~certification~~ an authentication ticket ID confirmation response from the Join merge provider to the client.

As shown in Figure 95, the Join merge provider 13A stores the name of the user in the tag <name></name>, the UID of the user in the main sub provider in the tag <id></id> and the group information of the group to which that same user belongs and acquired from each of the sub providers 14 in one or more tags <item></item> included in one tag <groupList></groupList>, and transmits the same

to the client.

Because the Join merge provider 13A can acquire the UID that distinguishes the user from the main sub provider as explained in Figure 94, it is possible to acquire the UID of the same user from the integrated directory 180 by using that UID and to acquire the group information from each of the sub providers 14 about the groups in which the same user is registered as the user of the sub providers 14 by using the acquired UID and the session ID 310 of the session ticket 300 of sub provider 14.

For example, G:WinNT4:group1 and G:WinNT4:group2 stored in the tag <item></item> of Figure 95 are the group information of the group to which the user 3238994209 (yamada), registered to the WinNT certification directory provider 7 as the user thereof, belongs. Further, G:Local:group1 and G:Local:group2 stored in the tag <item></item> of Figure 95 are the group information of the group to which the user 3238994209 (yamada), registered to the Local certification directory provider 8 as the user thereof, belongs.

The Join merge provider 13A can merge these group information and provide to the client.

As explained with Example 5, the user is

certified as the user of the main sub provider by merely transmitting the user name and password once to the Join merge provider 13A for certification even in the case that sub provider 14 requires the
5 certification, and it is possible to acquire the group information of the groups to which the same user belongs from all of the registered sub providers 14.

In the explanation of Example 5,
10 explanation has been made of the case in which the certification ticket ID 510 and/or the certification ticket ID 610 are transmitted and received between the Join merge provider 13A and the sub provider 14 and between the Join merge provider 13A and the
15 client. However, this does not limit the present invention this enforcement and it is also possible to transmit and receive the certification ticket 500 and/or the certification ticket 600. This applies also to the cases described below.

20 Furthermore, the Join merge provider 13A can designate plural main sub providers.

By storing the managing ID and the managing password for acquisition of the certification ticket of the sub-sub provider in the sub provider
25 registration part 136, the Join merge provider 13A

can designate the sub-sub provider as the new main sub provider.

For example, the Join merge provider 13A uses, when a managing ID and a managing password of a sub-sub provider are registered newly in the sub-provider registration part 136, this sub-sub provider as the new main sub provider, and acquires the certification ticket 600 and/or the certification ticket ID 610 certifying the user in that main sub provider from the main sub provider by using the foregoing managing ID and the managing password.

The Join merge provider 13A transmits the certification ticket ID confirmation request to the main sub provider by using the certification ticket ID 610 thus acquired, and acquires the UID of the main sub provider from the main sub provider.

The Join merge provider 13A registers the certification ticket 600 thus acquired and certifying the user in the main sub provider and the UID of the main sub provider in the integrated directory 180.

Figure 96 is the concept diagram of the data managed in the integrated directory.

As shown in Figure 96, the integrated directory 180 manages by integrating the UIDs of one or more main sub providers and one or more sub-sub

providers and the certification tickets of one or more main sub providers

The Join merge provider 13A can manage by designating plural main sub providers.

5 The difference between the main sub provider and the sub-sub provider is that whether or not the managing ID and the managing password are registered in sub provider registration part 136.

For example, in the case a new sub provider
10 14 is added to the Join merge provider 13A, the new sub provider 14 becomes a main sub provider when the managing ID and the managing password are registered in the sub provider registration part 136. When the managing ID and the managing password are
15 not registered to the sub provider registration part 136, on the other hand, the new sub provider 14 becomes a sub-sub provider.

By using such a construction, the client can choose the main sub provider and selectively
20 permit the user and/or the user group registered to that main sub provider to use the service that the client provides.

Hereinafter, the example for the case of introducing the Join merge provider 13A will be
25 explained with reference to Figure 97.

Figure 97 is a diagram for explaining the example of conducting the certification of a user by reading an IC card by utilizing the Join merge provider and acquires the document accumulated in the repository service.

In the step S100, the IC card reading service 190 give the user name and password read from the IC card to Join merge provider 13A.

Following the step S100, the process proceeds to the step S101 and the Join merge provider 13A transmits the issue request of the certification ticket 600 that contains the user name and password acquired in the step S100 to the main sub provider 220 and to the IC card certification Local provider 230, which is a sub-sub provider.

The IC card certification Local provider 230 forming a sub-sub provider carries out the certification by using the above-mentioned user name and the password and issues the certification ticket 600 in the case that the certification has succeeded.

Following the step S101, the process proceeds to the step S102, and the IC card certification Local provider 230, which is a sub-sub provider, issues the certification ticket issue response including the certification ticket ID 610 of

certification ticket 600 and transmits the same to
the Join merge provider 13A. Further, the main sub
provider 220 issues the certification ticket issue
response indicating that the certification has failed
5 and transmits the same to the Join merge provider 13A.

Following the step S102, the process
proceeds to the step S103 and the Join merge provider
13A transmits the confirmation request of the
certification ticket ID 610 to the IC card
10 certification Local provider 230 by using the
certification ticket ID 610 of the certification
ticket 600.

Furthermore, it is possible to construct
such that the Join merge provider 13A transmits the
15 confirmation request of the certification ticket ID
610 to all of the registered sub providers subjected
to the management.

Following the step S103, the process
proceeds to the step S104 and the IC card
20 certification Local provider 230 transmits the
confirmation response of the certification ticket ID
610 including the UID of the user who has succeeded
in the certification to the Join merge provider 13A.

The join merge provider 13A acquires the
25 UID of the main sub provider for the same user from

the integrated directory 180 based on the UID included in the acquired certification ticket confirmation response.

Following the step S104, the process
5 proceeds to the step S105 and the Join merge provider 13A transmits the issue request of the certification ticket 600 of the user corresponding to the UID of the main sub provider to the main sub provider 220, by using the managing ID and the managing password of
10 the main sub provider for creation of the certification ticket.

The main sub provider 220 carries out the certification of the user corresponding to that UID and by using the managing ID and the managing
15 password, and when the certification has succeeded, the main sub provider 220 issues the certification ticket 600.

Following the step 105, the process proceeds to the step S106, and the main sub provider
20 220 creates the certification ticket issue response including the certification ticket ID 610 of the certification ticket 600 and transmits the same to the Join merge provider 13A.

Following the step S106, the process
25 proceeds to the step S107 and the Join merge provider

13A creates, upon acquisition of the certification ticket issue response including the certification ticket ID 610 from the main sub provider 220, the certification ticket 500 certifying the user in the
5 Join merge provider 13A and transmits the certification ticket issue response including the certification ticket ID 510 of the certification ticket 500 thus created to that IC card reading service 190.

10 Following the step S107, the process proceeds to the step S108 and the IC card reading service 190 transmits the issue request of the session ticket 700 containing the certification ticket ID 510 acquired in the step S107 and permits
15 the use of the service provided by the repository service to the repository service 170.

 Following the step S108, the process proceeds to the step S109 and the repository service 170 transmits, in order to confirm whether or not the
20 issue request of the session ticket 700 that received in the step S108 is the request from a valid user, the certification ticket ID confirmation request including the certification ticket ID 510 to the Join merge provider 13A, by using that certification
25 ticket ID 510 included in the issue request of the

session ticket 700.

Following the step S109, the process proceeds to the step S110 and the Join merge provider 13A transmits the confirmation request of the
5 certification ticket ID 610 acquired from the main sub provider 220 in the step S106 based on the certification ticket ID 510 contained in the certification ticket ID confirmation request acquired in the step S109, to the main sub provider 220.

10 Following the step S110, the process proceeds to the step S111 and the main sub provider 220 transmits the certification ticket confirmation response including the UID of the user corresponding to the certification ticket ID 610 included in the
15 confirmation request of the certification ticket ID 610 to the Join merge provider 13A.

The Join merge provider 13A acquires the UID of the same user from the integrated directory 180 based on the UID included in the certification
20 ticket confirmation response thus acquired.

Following the step S111, the process proceeds to the step S112 and the Join merge provider 13A transmits the acquisition request of the group information of the group to which the user
25 corresponding to the UID belongs and including

therein the UID of the user registered to the main
sub provider 220 as the user of the main sub provider
220 and the session ticket ID 310 of the session
ticket 300 of the main sub provider 220, to the main
5 sub provider 220.

Alternatively, the Join merge provider 13A
may transmit the acquisition request of the group
information for the group to which the user
corresponding to the UID belongs and including
10 therein the UID of the user registered to the IC card
certification Local provider 230 as the user of the
IC card certification Local provider 230 and the
session ticket ID3 10 of the session ticket 300 of
the certification Local provider 230, to the IC card
15 certification Local provider 230.

Following the step S112, the process
proceeds to the step S113 and the Join merge provider
13A and/or the IC card certification Local provider
230 creates the acquisition response including the
20 group information of the group to which the user
corresponding to the UID belongs, the UID being the
one included in the acquisition request of the group
information for the group to which the user belongs,
to Join merge provider 13A.

25 Following the step S113, the process

proceeds to the step S114 and the Join merge provider
13A merges the user information acquired in the step
S111 and/or the group information of the group to
which the user belongs and acquired in the step S113,
5 and creates the certification ticket ID confirmation
response including the merged information, and
transmits the same to the repository service 170.

Following the step S114, the process
proceeds to the step S115 and the repository service
10 170 creates, in the case there exists a group
permitted to use the service provided by the
repository service 170 in the groups acquired in the
step S114, creates the session ticket 700 permitting
the use of the service and transmits the issue
15 response of the session ticket including the session
ticket ID710 of the session ticket 700 to the IC card
reading service 190.

Following the step S115, the process
proceeds to the step S116 and the IC card reading
20 service 190 transmits the acquisition request of the
document including the session ticket ID 710 of the
session ticket 700 thus acquired to the repository
service 170.

Following the step S116, the process
25 proceeds to the step S117 and the repository service

170 determines whether or not the session ticket ID 710 included in the acquisition request of the document acquired in the step S116 is the session ticket ID710 of a valid session ticket 700. In the
5 case it is determined that the session ticket ID 710 is a valid session ticket ID 710, the repository service 170 transmits the acquisition response of the document including the designated document to the IC card reading service 190.

10 By introducing Join merge provider 13A the user is certified by the IC card certification Local provider 230, for example, by just passing the IC card. Thus, as long as he or she is the same user, the user can use the repository service 170 that
15 permits the use thereof only to the users of main sub provider 220.

[EXAMPLE 6]

Hereinafter, the information (configuration
20 information) related to the construction of the Join merge provider 13A and the sub provider 14 is managed outside the Join merge provider 13A will be described.

Figure 98 is another diagram explaining the
25 construction of the UCS. For the sake of simplicity

of explanation, the explanation below with reference to Figure 98 assumes that the Join merge provider 13A and all of the sub providers 14 are included in the UCS49A as in the case of Figure 61. As noted before,
5 some or all of the sub providers 14 may be included in other fusion machine 120, and the like.

The UCS 49A shown in Figure 98 includes a dispatcher 21, a configuration manager 22, the Join merge provider 13A and the sub providers 14₁ - 14_n.

10 The dispatcher 21 receives the request from the client and distributes the request to the configuration manager 22, the Join merge provider 13A, and the like, and further transmits the processing result that the configuration manager 22 or the Join
15 merge provider 13A has processed according to the distributed request, to the client.

It should be noted that the configuration manager 22 is the managing part managing the construction of the Join merge provider 13A and the
20 sub providers 14₁ - 14_n and holds the construction information in the storage part.

Here, it should be noted that the Join merge provider 13A and the sub provider 14 are identical to those explained with reference to
25 Example 4 or Example 5.

Hereinafter, the example of the provider list acquisition sequence will be explained with reference to Figure 99, wherein it should be noted that Figure 99 is a diagram for explaining the
5 example of the provider list acquisition sequence.

As shown in Figure 99, the client transmits, in the example of adding a new provider as the sub provider 14 of the Join merge provider 13A, the provider list acquisition request including the
10 getProviderList method of the dispatcher 21, to the dispatcher 21 (Sequence SQ1).

The dispatcher 21 that has received the provider list acquisition request calls the enumerateProviderName method of the configuration
15 manager 22 (Sequence SQ2).

The configuration rations manager 22 that has been subjected to the call of the enumerateProviderName method acquires the provider name, and the like, from the storage part and returns
20 the same to the dispatcher 21 as the provider list.

The dispatcher 21 creates the provider list acquisition response including the provider list and transmits the same to the requesting client. The example of the provider list acquisition response
25 will be explained later with reference to Figure 101.

For example, by conducting the processing shown in Figure 99, the client displays the list of the providers and the user can select the provider to be added newly from the list of the providers as the
5 sub provider 14 of the Join merge provider 13A.

Hereinafter, the example of the provider list acquisition request will be shown with reference to Figure 100, wherein Figure 100 is an example of the the XML message of a provider list acquisition
10 request from the client to the dispatcher.

As shown in Figure 100, it can be seen that the `getProviderList` method is included in the provider list acquisition request.

Hereinafter, an example of the provider
15 list acquisition response will be described with reference to Figure 101, wherein Figure 101 is an example of the XML message of the provider list acquisition response from the dispatcher to the client.

20 As shown in Figure 101, the name of the provider (or the identifier distinguishing the provider) is stored in the tag of `<item></item>`.

Next, an example of the sub provider addition sequence will be explained with reference to
25 Figure 102, wherein Figure 102 is a diagram

explaining the example of the sub provider addition sequence.

When the user has selected the provider to be added from the provider list as shown in Figure 102 by using a GUI (Graphical User Interface) to be described later, the client transmits the sub provider addition request including the createProvider method of dispatcher 21 to the dispatcher 21 (sequence SQ10). Here, the example of the sub provider addition request will be shown later with reference to Figure 103. While being omitted in Figure 102, the sub provider addition request includes the information as to what sub provider 14 is to be added to what Union merge providers 13.

The dispatcher 21 that has received the sub provider addition request calls the createProviderConfiguration method of the configuration manager 22 (sequence SQ11).

The configuration manager 22 called by the createProviderConfiguration method secures a new region in the storage part for storing the construction information and returns the storage area information regarding that region (head address, and the like of the newly secured region) to the dispatcher 21.

The dispatcher 21 that has thus acquired the storage area information calls the createProvider method of the sub provider 14 to be added while using the storage area information as the argument
5 (Sequence SQ12).

The sub provider 14 having the createProvider method thus called calls the setAttribute method of the configuration manager 22 (Sequence SQ13) while using the storage area
10 information provided as the argument of the createProvider method and further the default construction information of the identifier, the name of the sub provider 14, and the like, as the argument.

The configuration manager 22 having the
15 setAttribute method thus called stores the construction information including the default construction information of the sub provider 14 given as the argument of the setAttribute method in a corresponding storage region based on the storage
20 area information given as the argument of the setAttribute method.

The dispatcher 21 received the information indicating that the construction information has been stored from the configuration manager 22 creates the
25 sub provider addition response including the

information indicating that the addition of the provider has completed normally, and transmits the same to the requesting client. The example of the sub provider addition response will be shown later with
5 reference to in Figure 104.

By conducting the processing shown in Figure 102, it is possible to add a new provider as the sub provider 14 of the Join merge provider 13A.

Hereinafter, the example of the sub
10 provider addition request will be explained with reference to Figure 103, wherein Figure 103 is the XML message of a sub provider addition request from the client to the dispatcher.

As shown in Figure 46, the sub provider
15 addition request includes the createProvider method. Further, the identifier or the name of the Join merge provider is included in the tag
<JoinMergeproviderName></JoinMergeproviderName> as, the argument of the createProvider method. Also, the
20 identifier or the name of the sub provider to be newly added is included in
<subproviderName></subproviderName> of the
<item></item> tag.

Hereinafter, the example of the sub
25 provider addition response will be explained with

reference to Figure 104, wherein Figure 104 is the XML message of a sub provider addition response from the dispatcher to the client.

As shown in Figure 104, the tag
5 <returnValue></returnValue> of the sub provider addition response includes the information representing whether or not the addition of the sub provider has been successful (O.K. in the example of Figure 104).

10 Hereinafter, an example of the hardware construction of the client will be explained with reference to Figure 105, wherein Figure 105 is the hardware construction diagram of a client.

The hardware construction of the client
15 shown in Figure 105 is formed of an input device 51, a display device 52, a drive device 53, a recording medium 54, a ROM55, a RAM56, a CPU57, an interface device 58 and a HDD59 connected with each other by a bus.

20 The input device 51 is formed of a keyboard, mouse, and the like operated by the user of the client and is used for inputting the various operational signals to the client. On the other hand, the display device 52 is formed of a display, and the
25 like, used by the user of the client and is used for

displaying various information. The interface device 58 is an interface connecting the client to the network 5, and the like.

For example, the application program, and
5 the like used for implementing the processing in the client is provided to the client by the recording medium 54 of the CD-ROM, and the like, or downloaded through the network 5. The recording medium 54 is set to the drive device 53 and the application program is
10 installed to the HDD 59 from the recording medium 54 through the drive device 53.

The ROM 55 stores the data, and the like. The RAM56 reads the application program, and the like, from the HDD 59 at the time of the activation of the
15 client and holds the same. The CPU57 carries out the processing according to the application program, and the like, read out to the RAM 56 and held therein. Further, the HDD 59 stores the data, files, and the like.

20 Although the foregoing explanation has been made by using the fusion machine 120 as an example of the apparatus on which the Join merge provider 13A and/or the sub provider 14 are mounted, it is also possible to construct so as to be mounted on a PC
25 (personal computer) shown in Figure 105.

Hereinafter, an example of the function of the client will be explained with reference to Figure 106, wherein Figure 106 is a functional block diagram of a client.

5 Below, an example of the function of the client will be described with reference to Figure 106 wherein Figure 106 is the functional exploded diagram of the client.

As shown in Figure 108, the client includes
10 the GUI display part 71, a control unit 72, a server calling part 73 and a XML generation analysis part 74.

The GUI display part 71 is the display part creating GUI to be describes later and displaying the same in the display, and the like, of the client. The
15 control unit 72 is the control unit that controls the overall processing of the client. The server calling part 73 is the calling part that calls the server including the Join merge provider 13A, and the like. Further, the XML generation analysis part 74
20 generates the XML and transmits the same to the server and further analyzes the XML message received from the server and acquires the data, and the like included in the XML message.

Hereinafter, an example of the GUI for
25 setting up the provider in the client will be

explained with reference to Figures 107A - 107C,
wherein Figures 107A - 107C are the diagrams showing
the GUI regarding the setting up of the provider in
the client.

5 The client creates, when the provider list
acquisition response shown in Figure 101 is received,
the user certification provider setting screen that
contains the list of the providers in the drop down
menu as shown in Figure 107A based on the list of the
10 providers included in the provider list acquisition
response and displays the same.

 It should be noted that the content of the
group box displayed under the drop down menu of the
user certification provider setting screen shown in
15 Figure 107A changes by the provider which the user
has selected from the drop down menu.

 For example, when the user has selected
"certification service reference" and clicked the
"reference" button in Figure 107A, the client
20 displays the reference screen for the external
certification as shown in Figure 107B. Here, it
should be noted that the external certification is
the certification that carries out the actual
certification (the ID password analyzing part 143 and
25 the certification ticket managing part 144 in the

example of Figures 73A - 73C), by using an server,
and the like as the certification engine.

When the user has clicked the "reference"
button in Figure 107B, the client displays the user
5 certification service management reference screen as
shown in Figure 107C.

Hereinafter, another example of the GUI for
setting up the client will be shown in Figure 108,
wherein Figure 108 is the second diagram showing the
10 GUI for setting up the provider in the client.

In Figure 108, an example screen is shown
for the case in which the user has chosen the Windows
(trade mark) the NT certification in the drop down
menu. It should be noted that the "setting of domain
15 controller" button of Figure 51 becomes effective
only in the case the user has selected "self
certification setting".

Hereinafter, the example other GUI for
setting up the provider in the client will be shown
20 in Figure 109, wherein Figure 109 is the third diagram
showing the GUI for setting up the provider in the
client.

In Figure 109, an example screen for the
case that the user has selected the ActiveDirectory
25 (trade mark) certification in the drop down menu.

Here, it should be noted that the "setting of the domain controller" button of Figure 109 becomes effective only in the case that the user has selected "the self certification setting".

5 Hereinafter, a further example of the GUI for setting up the provider in the client will be shown in Figure 110, wherein Figure 110 is the fourth diagram showing the GUI for setting the provider in the client.

10 Figure 110 shows an example screen for the case the user has selected the Notes (trade mark) certification in the drop down menu.

 Hereinafter, the example of a remote provider will be explained with reference to Figure
15 111, wherein Figure 111 is a diagram explaining the example of a remote provider.

 For example, in the case the Join merge provider 13A and/or the sub provider 14 has the "is_exported" attribute set to TRUE in the definition
20 file, it is possible to conduct the processing as a remote provider as will be describe later. Here, the remote provider is the provider not having a-
~~certification~~an authentication engine for itself in
the case the provider is a ~~certification~~an
25 authentication provider and carries out the

processing according to the request from the client
by utilizing the certification engine of other
providers as noted before. Here, the definition file
is included in the configuration manager 22, and the
5 like, for example.

For example, the sub provider 14₁
determines whether or not the "is_exported" attribute
is TRUE when it receives the use request of the
service (certification service, for example) from the
10 client or the Union merge provider 13 (sequence SQ20),
by referring to the definition file etc.

When it is determined that the
"is_exported" attribute is TRUE, the sub provider 14₁
acquires the connection destination information
15 stored in the registry, and the like, assuming that
the sub provider 14₁ itself is a remote provider, and
requests transfer of the service use request to the
connection destination (Sequence SQ21).

The sub provider 14_n that has received the
20 use request of the service determines whether or not
the "is_shared" attribute is TRUE by referring to the
definition file.

When it is determined that the "is_shared"
attribute is TRUE, the sub provider 14_n carries out
25 the processing according to the use request for the

service and returns the result of the processing to the remote provider (sub provider 14₁).

When the remote provider (sub provider 14₁) receives the processing result from the sub provider 14_n, the sub provider 14₁ applies a post-processing to the result of processing according to the needs and returns the result thus added with the post-processing to the requesting original client or the Join merge provider 13A.

Hereinafter, the example of processing of a remote provider will be explained with reference to Figure 112, wherein Figure 112 is a diagram explaining an example of the processing related to a remote provider.

In the Step S200, the sub provider 14₁ receives the use request of the service from the client or the Join merge provider 13A.

Following the step S200, the process proceeds to the step S201, and the sub provider 14₁ determines whether or not the "is_exported" attribute is TRUE by referring to the definition file. When it is determined that the "is_exported" attribute is TRUE, the sub provider 14₁ proceeds to the step S202, while when it determined that the "is_exported" attribute is FALSE, determination is made whether or

not the "is_shared" attribute is real. For the sake of simplification of explanation, the processing for the case in which "is_exported" attribute is FALSE is omitted in Figure 112.

5 In the step S202, sub provider 141 acquires the connection destination information stored in a registry, and the like based on the judgment that there exists a remote provider.

 Following the step S202, the process
10 proceeds to the step S203 and the sub provider 141 forwards the use request for the service received in the step S200 to the connection destination acquired in the step S202.

 Following the step S203, the process
15 proceeds to the step S204 and the sub provider 14_n of the connection destination receives the forwarded use request of the service from the remote provider.

 Following the step S204, the process
 proceeds to the step S205 and the sub provider 14_n of
20 the connection destination determines whether or not the is_shared attribute is TRUE by referring to the definition file. When it is determined that the "is_shared" attribute is TRUE, the sub provider 14_n of the connection destination proceeds to the step
25 S206 and returns NG to the remote provider when it is

determined that the "is_shared" attribute is FALSE.

In step S206, the sub provider 14_n of the connection destination reads out the mutual trust relationship of the request source remote provider
5 from the configuration manager 22.

Following the step S206, the process proceeds to the step S207 and the sub provider 14_n of the connection destination determines whether or not there is mutual trust relationship to between the own
10 sub provider 14_n and the request source remote provider. When it is determined that there exists no mutual trust relationship between the own sub provider 14_n and the request source remote provider, the process proceeds to the step S208 and the sub
15 provider 14_n of the connection destination returns NG to the request source remote provider.

In the step S208, the sub provider 14_n of the connection destination carries out the processing according to the needs.

20 Following step S208, the process proceeds to the step S209 and the sub provider 14_n of the connection destination returns the result of the processing to the request source remote provider.

Following the step S209, the process
25 proceeds to the step S210 and the remote provider

receives the result of processing from the sub provider 14n of the connection destination.

Following the step S210, the process proceeds to the step S211, and a remote provider adds
5 a necessary post-processing to the processing result received in the step S210.

Following the step S211, the process proceeds to the step S212, and the remote provider returns the processing result added with a necessary
10 post-processing in the step S211 to the request source client or the Join merge provider 13A.

While explanation has been made in Example 6 for the case of adding a sub provider 14, the same procedure can be applied also to the case of
15 registering a sub provider 14 where there is no registered sub provider 14.

[EXAMPLE 7]

Hereinafter, another example of holding and
20 managing the information (configuration information) related to the construction of the Join merge provider 13A and the sub providers 14 in the configuration manager 22 outside the Join merge provider 13A as in the case of Example 6 will be
25 described.

In Example 7, the explanation will be made for the case of using a Join merge provider (idJoin merge provider), which does not have the integrated directory 180 in the Join merge provider 13A, as
5 explained in Example 4 and Example 5.

Figure 113 is a further diagram explaining the construction of the UCS. In Figure 113, the explanation will be made on the assumption that all of the idJoin merge provider, the main sub provider
10 and the sub-sub providers are included in the UCS49A for the sake of simplicity. Further, a part or all of the main sub provider and/or the sub-sub provider may be included in other fusion machine 120.

The UCS 49A shown in Figure 113 includes
15 the dispatcher 21, the configuration manager 22, the idJoin merge provider, the main sub provider and at least one sub-sub provider.

The dispatcher 21 receives the request from the client and distributes the request to the
20 configuration manager 22, the idJoin merge provider, and the like, and further transmits the processing result that the configuration manager 22 or the idJoin merge provider has processed according to the distributed request, to the client.

25 It should be noted that the configuration

manager 22 is the managing part managing the construction of the idJoin merge provider and the sub providers $14_1 - 14_n$ and holds the construction information in the storage part.

5 Hereinafter, the example of the processing that the idJoin merge provider, the main sub provider and the sub sub provider will be explained with reference to Figures 114 - 119, wherein Figure 114 is a diagram for explaining the example of the property
10 adding sequence.

As shown in Figure 114, the client transmits a property adding request to the idJoin merge provider via the dispatcher 21 (Sequence SQ30).

15 The idJoin provider that has received the property adding request acquires the session ID of the main sub provider and the sub sub provider from the session managing part 137, and the like, in the idJoin merge provider (Sequence SQ31).

20 The idJoin merge provider then transmits the property adding request including the session ID of the main sub provider acquired in the sequence SQ31 to the main sub provider (sequence SQ32).

25 The main sub provider then adds the property value to the directory 150 based on the acquired property adding request (sequence SQ33).

Also, the main sub provider acquires all the properties from the directory 150 and provides the same to the idJoin merge provider (sequence SQ34).

The IdJoin merge provider acquires the
5 entry ID that distinguishes the user or group from all the properties of the main sub providers thus acquired (sequence SQ35), and transmits the property adding request that contains the session ID of the sub-sub provider acquired in the sequence SQ31 and
10 the entry ID acquired in the sequence SQ35 to the sub-sub provider (Sequence SQ36).

The sub-sub provider adds, when the entry corresponding to the entry ID included in the acquired property adding request is not existing in
15 the directory 150 of that sub-sub provider, the entry to the directory 150 (Sequence SQ37), while when the entry corresponding to the entry ID is existing in the directory 150 of this sub-sub provider, the sub-sub provider adds the property value to this entry
20 (Sequence SQ38).

By conducting such a processing shown in Figure 114, it becomes possible to add the property to the entry that the entry ID agrees, even in the case the Join merge provider 13A does not have the
25 integrated directory 180.

Hereinafter, the example of the property acquisition sequence will be explained by using Figure 115, wherein Figure 115 is a diagram explaining the example of the property acquisition sequence.

As shown in Figure 115, the client transmits the property acquisition request to the idJoin merge provider via the dispatcher 21 (Sequence SQ40), wherein the example of the property acquisition request will be explained later in Figure 116.

The IdJoin merge provider that has received the property acquisition request acquires the session ID of the main sub provider and the sub-sub provider from the session managing part 137 inside the idJoin merge provider (Sequence SQ41).

The IdJoin merge provider transmits the property acquisition request including the session ID of the main sub provider acquired in the sequence SQ41 to the main sub provider (Sequence SQ42).

The main sub provider acquires the value of the corresponding property from the directory 150 based on the acquired property acquisition request and provides the same to the idJoin merge provider (Sequence SQ43).

Also, the main sub provider acquires all the properties from the directory 150 and provides the same to the idJoin merge provider (sequence SQ44).

The idJoin merge provider acquires the
5 entry ID that distinguishes the user or group
from all the properties of the main sub provider thus
acquired (Sequence SQ45), transmits the property
acquisition request that includes the session ID of
the sub-sub provider acquired in the sequence SQ41
10 and the entry ID acquired in the sequence SQ45 to the
sub-sub provider (Sequence SQ46).

The sub-sub provider acquires the property
value from the entry corresponding to the entry ID
contained in the acquired property acquisition
15 (sequence SQ47) and provides the same to the idJoin
merge provider.

The idJoin merge provider merges the
property of the main sub provider acquired in the
sequence SQ43 and the property of each of the sub-sub
20 providers acquired in the sequence SQ47 and creates a
property acquisition response including the property
of the result, and transmits the same to the client
via the dispatcher 21 (Sequence SQ48). The example of
the property acquisition response will be explained
25 in Figure 69 later.

By conducting such a processing shown in Figure 115, it becomes possible to acquire the property of the entry that the entry ID agrees even in the case the Join merge provider 13A does not have
5 the integrated directory 180.

Hereinafter, the example of the property acquisition request will be explained with reference to Figure 116, wherein Figure 116 is a diagram showing the example of the property acquisition
10 request.

Further, the example of the property acquisition response is shown in Figure 69, wherein Figure 69 is the diagram showing the example of the property acquisition response.

15 It should be noted that the tag <propVal></propVal> of Figure 69 includes o the mail address of the user as the property value, for example.

Hereinafter, the example of the property
20 updating sequence will be explained by using Figure 118, wherein Figure 118 is a diagram for explaining the example of the property updating sequence.

As shown in Figure 118, the client transmits the updating request of the property to the
25 idJoin merge provider via the dispatcher 21, and the

like (Sequence SQ50).

The idJoin merge provider that has received the updating request of the property acquires the session ID of the main sub provider and the sub-sub
5 providers from the session managing part 137, and the like provided inside the idJoin merge provider (Sequence SQ51).

The idJoin merge provider transmits the updating request of the property including the
10 session ID of the main sub provider acquired in the sequence SQ51 to the main sub provider (Sequence SQ52).

The main sub provider carries out the updating of the property value to the directory 150
15 based on the updating request of the acquired property (sequence SQ53).

Also, the main sub provider acquires all the properties from the directory 150 and provides the same to the idJoin merge provider (sequence SQ54).

20 The idJoin merge provider acquires the entry ID that distinguishes the user or group from all the properties of the main sub providers thus acquired (sequence SQ55), and transmits the update request for the properties including the session ID
25 of the sub-sub provider acquired in the sequence SQ51

and the entry ID acquired in the sequence SQ55 to the subs-ub provider (sequence SQ56).

The sub-sub provider updates, in the event there exists the entry corresponding to the entry ID
5 included in the acquired updating request for the property in the directory 150 of that sub-sub provider, the property value of that entry (sequence SQ57).

By conducting such a processing shown in
10 Figure 118, it becomes possible to update the property of the entry that the entry ID agrees even in the case the Join merge provider 13A does not hold the integrated directory 180.

Hereinafter, the example of the property
15 elimination sequence will be explained by using Figure 119, wherein Figure 119 is a diagram explaining the example of the property elimination sequence.

As shown in Figure 119, the client
20 transmits the property elimination request to the idJoin merge provider via the dispatcher 2, and the like (sequence SQ60).

The idJoin merge provider thus received the property elimination request acquires the session ID
25 of the main sub provider and also the sub-sub

provider from the session managing part 137, and the like, inside the idJoin merge provider (Sequence SQ61).

5 The idJoin merge provider transmits the property elimination request including the session ID of the main sub provider acquired in the sequence SQ61 to the main sub provider (sequence SQ62).

 The main sub provider eliminate the value of the corresponding property of the directory 150
10 based on the property elimination request thus acquired (sequence SQ63).

 Further, the main sub provider acquires all the properties from the directory 150 and provides the same to the idJoin merge provider (sequence SQ64).

15 The idJoin merge provider acquires the entry ID that distinguishes the user or group from all the properties of the main sub providers thus acquired (Sequence SQ65), transmits the property elimination request containing the session ID of the
20 sub-sub provider acquired in the sequence SQ61 and the entry ID acquired in the sequence SQ65 to the sub-sub provider (sequence SQ66).

 The sub-sub provider then eliminates the property value of the entry corresponding to the
25 entry ID included the acquired property elimination

request (sequence SQ67).

By conducting the processing shown in Figure 119, it becomes possible to eliminate the property of the entry that the entry ID agrees even
5 in the case the Join merge provider 13A does not hold the integrated directory 180.

Hereinafter, the examples of the GUI in the client for the case the idJoin merge provider is applied to the fusion machine 120 with reference to
10 Figures 120A and 120B, wherein Figures 120A and 120B are the diagrams showing the example of the GUI in the client for the case the idJoin merge provider is applied to the fusion machine, and the like.

Figure 120A is an example of the GUI in a
15 client before applying the idJoin merge provider to the fusion machine 120, and the like, while Figure 120B is an example of the GUI in the client after applying the idJoin merge provider to the fusion machine 120, and the like.

20 In Figure 120B, it is becomes possible to add the property value of the entry that the entry ID agrees,

Further, the present invention is not limited to the embodiments described heretofore, but
25 various variations and modifications may be made

without departing from the scope of the invention.

The present invention based on the Japanese
priority applications No.2003-017922 filed on January
27, 2003, No.2003-017923 filed on January 27, 2003,
5 No.2004-11068 filed on January 19, 2004 and No.2004-
11069 filed on January 19, 2004, the entire contents
of which are incorporated herein by reference.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

5 1. A merge information providing apparatus
having merge user information providing means, said
merge user information providing means comprising
plural user information providing means providing
information regarding a user as subordinate user
10 information providing means,

 said merge information providing apparatus
acquiring said information regarding said user from
said user information providing means and providing
said acquired information regarding said user with
15 merging.

20 2. The merge information providing
apparatus of as claimed in claim 1, wherein said
merge information providing apparatus comprises:
 user information acquisition means for
acquiring said information regarding said user from
25 said user information providing means; and

user information merging means for merging
said information regarding said user acquired in said
user information acquisition means.

5

3. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein said user
10 information acquisition means acquires said
information regarding said user from said user
information providing means by using first use
permission information permitting the use of said
user information providing means.

15

4. The merge information providing
20 apparatus as claimed in claim 3, further comprising
use permission information acquisition means for
acquiring said first use permission information from
said user information providing means.

25

5. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising
use permission information creation means for
creating second use permission information that
5 permits the use of said merge user information
providing means.

10

6. The merge information providing
apparatus of the claim 5, wherein said use permission
information creation means creates said second use
permission information including said first use
15 permission information by using said first use
permission information.

20

7. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising
setting means for setting up said subordinate user
information providing means according to a request.

25

8. A merge information providing apparatus
having merge user information providing means, said
merge user information providing means comprising
plural user information providing means providing
5 information regarding a user and further providing a
~~certification~~an authentication service regarding said
user as subordinate user information providing means,
said merge information providing apparatus
acquiring said information regarding said user from
10 said user information providing means and providing
said acquired information regarding said user with
merging.

15

9. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 8, further comprising:
user information acquisition means for
20 acquiring said information regarding said user from
said user information providing means; and
user information merging means for merging
said information regarding said user acquired in said
user information acquisition means.

25

10. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein said user
information acquisition means acquires said
information regarding said user from said user
5 information providing means by using first use
permission information permitting the use of said
user information providing means.

10

11. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 10, further comprising
use permission information acquisition means for
15 acquiring said first use permission information from
said user information providing means.

20

12. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 8, further comprising
use permission information creation means for
25 creating second use permission information that

permits the use of said merge user information
providing means.

5

13. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein said use
permission information creation means creates said
10 second use permission information including said
first use permission information by using said first
use permission information.

15

14. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 8, further comprising
setting means for setting up said subordinate user
20 information providing means according to a request.

25

15. The merge information providing

apparatus as claimed in claim 8, further comprising
certification information acquisition means for
acquiring first certification information certifying
certification of said user in said user information
5 providing means, from said user information providing
means.

10

16. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 15, further comprising
second certification information creation means for
creating second certification information containing
15 therein said first certification information and
certifying certification of said user in said merge
user information providing means by using said first
certification information.

20

17. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 8, further comprising
25 user distinction information acquisition means for

acquiring user distinction information that
distinguishes said user from said user information
providing means.

5

18. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein said user
10 distinction information acquisition means acquires
said user distinction information from said user
information providing means by using first
certification information included in said second
certification information.

15

19. An information providing apparatus
20 having user information providing means for providing
information regarding a user,

said user information providing means
providing information regarding a designated user in
response to a request from a merge user information
25 providing means, said merge user information

providing means comprising said user information
providing means and other user information providing
means as subordinate user information providing means,
to said merge user information providing means.

5

20. The information providing apparatus as
10 claimed in claim 19, wherein said user information
providing means further comprises user information
saving means for saving said information regarding
said user.

15

21. The information providing apparatus as
claimed in claim 19, wherein said information
20 regarding said user is user information and/or group
information of a group to which said user belong, and
wherein said group information includes user
information and/or group information of other user
information providing means.

25

22. The information providing apparatus
having user information providing means providing
information regarding a user and further a-
~~certification~~an authentication service regarding said
5 user,

said user information providing means
providing information regarding a designated user in
response to a request from a merge user information
providing means, said merge user information
10 providing means comprising said user information
providing means and other user information providing
means as subordinate user information providing means,
to said merge user information providing means.

15

23. The information providing apparatus as
claimed in claim 22, wherein said user information
20 providing means further comprises user information
saving means for saving said information regarding
said user.

25

24. The information providing apparatus as
claimed in claim 22, wherein said information
regarding said user is user information and/or group
5 information of a group to which said user belongs,
and wherein said group information includes user
information and/or group information of other user
information providing means.

10

25. A managing apparatus, comprising:
a merge information providing apparatus
15 having merge user information providing means, said
merge user information providing means comprising
plural user information providing means providing
information regarding a user as subordinate user
information providing means, and
20 setup request transmission means for
transmitting a request regarding a set up of said
subordinate user information providing means,
said merge information providing apparatus
acquiring said information regarding said user from
25 said user information providing means and providing

said acquired information regarding said user with merging.

5

26. The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 25, further comprising:

user information acquisition means for
10 acquiring said information regarding said user from said user information providing means; and

user information merging means merging said information regarding said user acquired in said user information acquisition means.

15

27. The managing apparatus as claimed in
20 claim 26, wherein said user information acquisition means acquires said information regarding said user from said user information providing means by using first use permission information permitting the use of said user information providing means.

25

28. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 27, further comprising
use permission information acquisition means for
5 acquiring said first use permission information from
said user information providing means.

10

29. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 25, further comprising use permission
information creation means for creating second use
permission information that permits the use of said
15 merge user information providing means.

20 30. The managing apparatus of the claim 29,
wherein said use permission information creation
means creates said second use permission information
including said first use permission information by
using said first use permission information.

25

31. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 25, further comprising setting means for
setting up said subordinate user information
5 providing means according to a request.

10 32. A managing apparatus, comprising:
a merge information providing apparatus
having merge user information providing means, said
merge user information providing means comprising
plural user information providing means providing
15 information regarding a user and further providing a-
~~certification~~ an authentication service regarding said
user as subordinate user information providing means;
and

setup request transmission means for
20 transmitting a request regarding setting up of said
subordinate user information providing means,

said merge information providing apparatus
acquiring said information regarding said user from
said user information providing means and providing
25 said acquired information regarding said user with

merging.

33. The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 32, further comprising:

5 user information acquisition means for acquiring said information regarding said user from said user information providing means; and

 user information merging means for merging said information regarding said user acquired in said
10 user information acquisition means.

15 34. The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 33, wherein said user information acquisition means acquires said information regarding said user from said user information providing means by using first use permission information permitting the use
20 of said user information providing means.

25 35. The managing apparatus as claimed in

claim 34, further comprising use permission
information acquisition means for acquiring said
first use permission information from said user
information providing means.

5

36. The managing apparatus as claimed in
10 claim 32, further comprising use permission
information creation means for creating second use
permission information that permits the use of said
merge user information providing means.

15

37. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 36, wherein said use permission information
20 creation means creates said second use permission
information including said first use permission
information by using said first use permission
information.

25

38. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 32, further comprising setting means for
5 setting up said subordinate user information
providing means according to a request.

10

39. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 32, further comprising certification
information acquisition means for acquiring first
certification information certifying certification of
15 said user in said user information providing means,
from said user information providing means.

20

40. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 39, further comprising second certification
information creation means for creating second
certification information containing therein said
25 first certification information and certifying

certification of said user in said merge user
information providing means by using said first
certification information.

5

41. The managing apparatus as claimed in
10 claim 32, further comprising user distinction
information acquisition means for acquiring user
distinction information that distinguishes said user
from said user information providing means.

15

42. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 41, wherein said user distinction information
20 acquisition means acquires said user distinction
information from said user information providing
means by using first certification information
included in said second certification information.

25

43. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 42, further comprising setting screen display
5 means for displaying a screen for setting said merge
user information providing means and said subordinate
user information providing means.

10

44. A merge information providing method in
merge user information providing means, said merge
user information providing means comprising plural
15 user information providing means providing
information regarding a user as subordinate user
information providing means, said method comprising
the steps of:

acquiring information regarding said user
20 from user information providing means; and
providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging.

25

45. A merge information providing method in
merge user information providing means, said merge
user information providing means comprising plural
5 user information providing means providing
information regarding a user as subordinate user
information providing means and further a-
~~certification~~ an authentication service regarding said
user, said method comprising the steps of:
10 acquiring said information regarding said
user from said user information providing means; and
providing said information regarding said
user with merging.

15

46. An information providing method in user
information providing means, said user information
20 providing means providing information regarding a
user, said method comprising:

a user information offer providing step for
providing, in response to a request from a merge user
information providing means comprising said user
25 information providing means and other user

information providing means as subordinate user
information providing means, information regarding a
designated user to said merge user information
providing means.

5

47. An information providing method in user
10 information providing means, said user information
providing means providing information regarding a
user and a ~~certification~~ an authentication service
regarding said user, said method comprising:

a user information providing step for
15 providing, in response to a request from a merge user
information providing means, said merge user
information providing means comprising said user
information providing means and other user
information providing means as subordinate user
20 information providing means, information regarding a
designated user to said merge user information
providing means.

25

48. A managing method in merge user
information providing means, said merge user
information providing means comprising plural user
5 information providing means providing information
regarding a user as subordinate user information
providing means, said method comprising the steps of:
acquiring said information regarding said
user from said user information providing means;
10 providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging; and
transmitting a set up request requesting
for a set up of said subordinate user information
providing means.

15

49. A managing method in merge user
20 information providing means, said merge user
information providing means comprising plural user
information providing means providing information
regarding a user and ~~a certification~~ an authentication
service regarding said user as subordinate user
25 information providing means, said method comprising

the steps of:

acquiring said information regarding said
user from said user information providing means;

providing said acquired information

5 regarding said user with merging; and

transmitting a set up request regarding a
set up of said subordinate user information providing
means.

10

50. A computer-implemented method for
providing merge information in merge user information
providing means, said merge user information
15 providing means comprising plural user information
providing means providing information regarding a
user as subordinate user information providing means,
said method comprising the steps of:

20 acquiring information regarding said user
from user information providing means; and

providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging.

25

51. A computer-implemented method of
providing merge information in merge user information
5 providing means, said merge user information
providing means comprising plural user information
providing means providing information regarding a
user as subordinate user information providing means
and further ~~a certification~~ an authentication service
10 regarding said user, said method comprising the steps
of:

acquiring said information regarding said
user from said user information providing means; and
providing said information regarding said
15 user with merging.

20 52. A computer-implemented method of
information in user information providing means, said
user information providing means providing
information regarding a user, said method comprising:
a user information offer providing step for
25 providing, in response to a request from a merge user

information providing means comprising said user
information providing means and other user
information providing means as subordinate user
information providing means, information regarding a
5 designated user to said merge user information
providing means.

10

53. A computer-implemented method of
providing information in user information providing
means, said user information providing means
providing information regarding a user and a—
15 ~~certification~~ an authentication service regarding said
user, said method comprising:

a user information providing step for
providing, in response to a request from a merge user
information providing means, said merge user
20 information providing means comprising said user
information providing means and other user
information providing means as subordinate user
information providing means, information regarding a
designated user to said merge user information
25 providing means.

5 54. A computer-implemented method of
managing in merge user information providing means,
said merge user information providing means
• comprising plural user information providing means
providing information regarding a user as subordinate
10 user information providing means, said method
comprising the steps of:

 acquiring said information regarding said
user from said user information providing means;
 providing said acquired information
15 regarding said user with merging; and
 transmitting a set up request requesting
for a set up of said subordinate user information
providing means.

20

 55. A computer-implemented method of
managing in merge user information providing means,
25 said merge user information providing means

comprising plural user information providing means
providing information regarding a user and a—
~~certification~~an authentication service regarding said
user as subordinate user information providing means,
5 said method comprising the steps of:

acquiring said information regarding said
user from said user information providing means;
providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging; and
10 transmitting a set up request regarding a
set up of said subordinate user information providing
means.

15

56. A processor-readable medium storing
program code for providing merge information in merge
user information providing means, said merge user
20 information providing means comprising plural user
information providing means providing information
regarding a user as subordinate user information
providing means, said method comprising the steps of:
acquiring information regarding said user
25 from user information providing means; and

providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging.

5 57. A processor-readable medium storing
program code for providing merge information in merge
user information providing means, said merge user
information providing means comprising plural user
information providing means providing information
10 regarding a user as subordinate user information
providing means and further ~~a certification~~ an
authentication service regarding said user, said
method comprising the steps of:

 acquiring said information regarding said
15 user from said user information providing means; and
 providing said information regarding said
user with merging.

20

 58. A processor-readable medium storing
program code for providing information in user
information providing means, said user information
25 providing means providing information regarding a

user, said method comprising:

a user information offer providing step for
providing, in response to a request from a merge user
information providing means comprising said user
5 information providing means and other user
information providing means as subordinate user
information providing means, information regarding a
designated user to said merge user information
providing means.

10

59. A processor-readable medium storing
15 program code for providing information in user
information providing means, said user information
providing means providing information regarding a
user and ~~a certification~~ an authentication service
regarding said user, said method comprising:

20 a user information providing step for
providing, in response to a request from a merge user
information providing means, said merge user
information providing means comprising said user
information providing means and other user
25 information providing means as subordinate user

information providing means, information regarding a designated user to said merge user information providing means.

5 60. A processor-readable medium storing
program code for managing in merge user information
providing means, said merge user information
providing means comprising plural user information
providing means providing information regarding a
10 user as subordinate user information providing means,
said method comprising the steps of:

 acquiring said information regarding said
user from said user information providing means;
 providing said acquired information
15 regarding said user with merging; and
 transmitting a set up request requesting
for a set up of said subordinate user information
providing means.

20

 61. A processor readable medium for storing
program code for managing in merge user information
25 providing means, said merge user information

providing means comprising plural user information
providing means providing information regarding a
user and a ~~certification~~ authentication service
regarding said user as subordinate user information
5 providing means, said method comprising the steps of:
acquiring said information regarding said
user from said user information providing means;
providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging; and
10 transmitting a set up request regarding a
set up of said subordinate user information providing
means.

15

62. A merge information providing apparatus
having merge user information providing means, said
merge user information providing means comprising
20 plural user information providing means providing
user information regarding a user as subordinate user
information providing means,
said merge information providing apparatus
acquiring user information regarding a user
25 registered to the user information providing means of

which use is permitted and the same user registered
to other user information providing means, without
distinguishing the user by the user whether or not
the use of said information providing means is
5 permitted, said merge information providing apparatus
providing said acquired information regarding said
user with merging.

10

63. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 62, comprising:
distinction information managing means for
15 managing distinction information that distinguishes
said user registered to said user information
providing means;
user information acquisition means for
acquiring said user information regarding said user
20 from said user information providing means; and
user information merging means merging said
user information regarding said user acquired in said
user information acquisition means.

25

64. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 62, wherein said
5 distinction information managing means provides said
distinction information of said same user to said
user information acquisition means in response to a
request from said user information acquisition means.

10

65. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 62, wherein said user
15 information acquisition means acquires said user
information regarding said user from said user
information providing means by using permission
information that permits the use of said distinction
information and said user information providing means.

20

66. The merge information providing
25 apparatus as claimed in claim 62, further comprising

set up means for setting up said subordinate user
information providing means according to a request.

5 67. A merge information providing apparatus
having merge user information providing means, said
merge user information providing means comprising
plural user information providing means providing
user information regarding a user and a-
10 ~~certification~~ an authentication service regarding said
user as subordinate user information providing means,
said merge information providing apparatus
acquiring user information regarding a user
registered to the user information providing means of
15 which use is permitted and/or certification is made
therein and the same user registered to other user
information providing means, without distinguishing
the user by whether or not the use of the user
information providing means is permitted and/or the
20 certification is made, said merge information
providing apparatus providing said acquired
information regarding said user with merging.

68. The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 67, comprising:

distinction information managing means for
5 managing distinction information that distinguishes
said user is registered to said user information
providing means;

user information acquisition means for
acquiring said user information regarding said user
10 from said user information providing means; and

user information merging means merging said
user information regarding said user acquired in said
user information acquisition means.

15

69. The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 68, wherein said

20 distinction information managing means provides said
distinction information of said same user to said
user information acquisition means according to a
request from said user information acquisition means.

25

70. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 68, wherein said user
5 information acquisition means acquires said user
information regarding said user from said user
information providing means by using permission
information that permits the use of said distinction
information and said user information providing means.
10

71. The merge information providing
15 apparatus as claimed in claim 67, further comprising
set up means for setting up said subordinate user
information providing means according to a request.

20

72. A merge information providing apparatus
having merge user information providing means, said
merge user information providing means comprising
25 main user information providing means and sub user

information providing means providing user
information regarding a user and a ~~certification~~ an
authentication service regarding said user as
subordinate user information providing means,

5 said merge information providing apparatus
acquiring user information regarding a user
registered to the user information providing means of
which use is permitted and/or certification is made
therein and the same user registered to other user
10 information providing means, without distinguishing
the user by whether or not the use of the user
information providing means is permitted and/or the
certification is made, said merge information
providing apparatus providing said acquired
15 information regarding said user with merging.

20 73. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 72, further comprises
certification information acquisition means for
acquiring first certification information that
certifies said user in said main user information
25 providing means from said main user information

providing means.

5 74. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 73, further comprising
second certification information creation means for
creating second certification information that
certifies said user in said merge user information
10 providing means and including said first
certification information, by using said first
certification information acquired in said
certification information acquisition means.

15

75. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 74, further comprising
20 second certification information providing means for
providing said second certification information to a
client requesting said certification.

25

76. The merge information providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 72, further comprising
set up means for setting up said subordinate user
5 information providing means according to a request.

10 77. An information providing apparatus
having user information providing means, said user
information providing means providing information
regarding a user,
said user information providing means
15 providing information regarding said user
corresponding to said distinction information that
distinguishes said user registered to said
information providing means and/or other user
information providing means to merge user information
20 providing means in response to a request from said
merge user information providing means, said merge
user information providing means including said user
information providing means and other user
information providing means as subordinate user
25 information providing means.

5 78. The information providing apparatus as
claimed in claim 77, further comprising user
information providing means for saving said
information regarding the said user.

10

 79. The information providing apparatus as
claimed in claim 77, wherein said information
15 regarding said user is user information and/or group
information of a group to which said user belongs,
said group information including user information
and/or group information of other user information
providing means.

20

 80. An information providing apparatus
25 having user information providing means, said user

information providing means providing information
regarding a user and a ~~certification~~ an authentication
service regarding said user,

 said user information providing means
5 comprising user information providing means for
providing, in response to a request from merge user
information providing means, said merge user
information providing means comprising said user
information providing means and other user
10 information providing means as subordinate user
information providing means, information regarding a
user corresponding to distinction information that
distinguishes said user registered to said user
information providing means and/or other user
15 information providing means, to said merge user
information providing means.

20

 81. The information providing apparatus as
claimed in claim 78, wherein said user information
providing means further comprising user information
saving means for saving said information regarding to
25 said user.

5 82. The information providing apparatus as
claimed in claim 80, wherein said information
regarding said user comprises user information and/or
group information about a group to which said user
belongs, said group information including user
10 information and/or group information of other user
information providing means.

15

 83. A managing apparatus, comprising:
 merge information providing apparatus
having merge user information providing means, said
merge user information providing means comprising
20 plural user information providing means providing
user information regarding a user as subordinate user
information providing means; and

 setup request transmission means for
transmitting information regarding set up of said
25 subordinate user information providing means,

said merge information providing apparatus
acquiring user information regarding a user
registered to the user information providing means of
which use is permitted and the same user registered
5 to other user information providing means, without
distinguishing the user by the user information
providing means of which use is permitted, said merge
information providing apparatus providing said
acquired information regarding said user with merging.
10

84. The managing apparatus as claimed in
15 claim 83, comprising:

distinction information managing means for
managing distinction information that distinguishes
said user is registered to said user information
providing means;

20 user information acquisition means for
acquiring said user information regarding said user
from said user information providing means; and

user information merging means merging said
user information regarding said user acquired in said
25 user information acquisition means.

5 85. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 83, wherein said distinction information
managing means provides said distinction information
of said same user to said user information
acquisition means in response to a request from said
10 user information acquisition means.

15 86. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 83, wherein said user information acquisition
means acquires said user information regarding said
user from said user information providing means by
using permission information that permits the use of
20 said distinction information and said user
information providing means.

87. The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 83, further comprising set up means for setting up said subordinate user information providing means according to a request.

5 88. The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 83, further comprising setup screen display means for displaying a screen for setting up said merge user information providing means and said subordinate user information providing means.

10

89. A managing apparatus, comprising:

15 a merge information providing apparatus having merge user information providing means, said merge user information providing means comprising plural user information providing means providing user information regarding a user and a—
20 ~~certification~~ an authentication service regarding said user as subordinate user information providing means; and

 setup request transmission means for transmitting information regarding to set up of
25 subordinate user information providing means,

said merge information providing apparatus
acquiring user information regarding a user
registered to the user information providing means of
which use is permitted and/or certification is made
5 therein and the same user registered to other user
information providing means, without distinguishing
the user by whether or not the use of the user
information providing means is permitted and/or the
certification is made, said merge information
10 providing apparatus providing said acquired
information regarding said user with merging.

15

90. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 89, comprising:

distinction information managing means for
managing distinction information that distinguishes
20 said user is registered to said user information
providing means;

user information acquisition means for
acquiring said user information regarding said user
from said user information providing means; and
25 user information merging means merging said

user information regarding said user acquired in said
user information acquisition means.

5

91. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 90, wherein said distinction information
managing means provides said distinction information
of said same user to said user information
10 acquisition means according to a request from said
user information acquisition means.

15

92. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 90, wherein said user information acquisition
means acquires said user information regarding said
user from said user information providing means by
20 using permission information that permits the use of
said distinction information and said user
information providing means.

25

93. The managing apparatus providing
apparatus as claimed in claim 89, further comprising
set up means for setting up said subordinate user
5 information providing means according to a request.

94. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 89, further comprising setup screen display
means for displaying a screen for setting up said
merge user information providing means and said
10 subordinate user information providing means.

15 95. A managing apparatus, comprising:
a merge information providing apparatus
having merge user information providing means, said
merge user information providing means comprising
main user information providing means and sub user
20 information providing means providing user
information regarding a user and a certification an
authentication service regarding said user as
subordinate user information providing means; and
setup request transmission means for
25 transmitting information regarding set up of said

subordinate user information providing means,

said merge information providing apparatus
acquiring user information regarding a user
registered to the user information providing means of
5 which use is permitted and/or the certification is
made therein and the same user registered to other
user information providing means, without
distinguishing the user by whether or not the use of
the user information providing means is permitted
10 and/or the certification is made, said merge
information providing apparatus providing said
acquired information regarding said user with merging.

15

96. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 95, further comprises certification information
acquisition means for acquiring first certification
20 information that certifies said user in said main
user information providing means from said main user
information providing means.

25

97. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 96, further comprising second certification
information creation means for creating second
5 certification information that certifies said user in
said merge user information providing means and
including said first certification information, by
using said first certification information acquired
in said certification information acquisition means.
10

98. The managing apparatus as claimed in
15 claim 96, further comprising second certification
information providing means for providing said second
certification information to a client requesting said
certification.

20

99. The managing apparatus as claimed in
claim 95, further comprising set up means for setting
up said subordinate user information providing means
25 according to a request.

5 100. A merge user information providing
method in merge user information providing means,
said merge user information providing means
comprising plural user information providing means
providing information regarding a user as subordinate
10 user information providing means, comprising the
steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user registered to said user information providing means of which use is permitted and the same user registered to other user information providing means, without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information providing means is permitted; and

providing said acquired information
20 regarding said user with merging.

25 101. A merge user information providing

method in merge user information providing means,
said merge user information providing means
comprising plural user information providing means
providing information regarding a user and a-
5 ~~certification~~ an authentication service regarding said
user as subordinate user information providing means,
comprising the steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user
registered to said user information providing means
10 of which use is permitted and/or certification has
been made and the same user registered to other user
information providing means, without distinguishing
said user by whether or not the use of said user
information providing means is permitted; and
15 providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging.

20

102. A merge user information providing
method in merge user information providing means,
said merge user information providing means
comprising main user information providing means and
25 sub user information providing means providing

information regarding a user and a ~~certification~~an authentication service regarding said user as subordinate user information providing means, comprising the steps of:

5 acquiring information regarding a user registered to said user information providing means of which use is permitted and/or certification has been made and the same user registered to other user information providing means, without distinguishing
10 said user by whether or not the use of said user information providing means is permitted; and
 providing said acquired information regarding said user with merging.

15

103. An information providing method in user information providing means, said user
20 information providing means providing information regarding a user, comprising the step of:

 providing, in response to a request from merge user information providing means, said merge user information providing means comprising said user
25 information providing means and other user

information providing means as subordinate
information providing means, information regarding a
user corresponding to distinction information
registered to said user information providing means
5 and/or other user information providing means for
distinguishing said user to said merge user
information providing means.

10

104. An information providing method in
user information providing means, said user
information providing means providing information
15 regarding a user and ~~a certification~~ an authentication
service regarding said user, said method comprising
the step of:

providing, in response to a request from
merge user information providing means, said merge
20 user information providing means comprising said user
information providing means and other user
information providing means as subordinate
information providing means, information regarding a
user corresponding to distinction information
25 registered to said user information providing means

and/or other user information providing means for distinguishing said user, to said merge user information providing means.

5

105. A managing method in merge user information providing means, said merge user information providing means comprising plural user
10 information providing means providing information regarding a user as subordinate user information providing means, comprising the steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user registered to said user information providing means
15 of which use is permitted and the same user registered to other user information providing means, without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information providing means is permitted;

20 providing said acquired information regarding said user with merging; and

transmitting a request regarding setup of said subordinate information providing means.

25

106. A managing method in merge user
information providing means, said merge user
5 information providing means comprising plural user
information providing means providing information
regarding a user and ~~a certification~~ an authentication
service regarding said user as subordinate user
information providing means, comprising the steps of:
10 acquiring information regarding a user
registered to said user information providing means
of which use is permitted and/or certification has
been made and the same user registered to other user
information providing means, without distinguishing
15 said user by whether or not the use of said user
information providing means is permitted;
providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging; and
transmitting a request regarding setup of
20 said subordinate information providing means.

107. A managing method in merge user
information providing means, said merge user
information providing means comprising main user
information providing means and sub user information
5 providing means providing information regarding a
user and ~~a certification~~ an authentication service
regarding said user as subordinate user information
providing means, comprising the steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user
10 registered to said user information providing means
of which use is permitted and/or certification has
been made and the same user registered to other user
information providing means, without distinguishing
said user by whether or not the use of said user
15 information providing means is permitted;

providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging; and

transmitting a request regarding setup of
said subordinate information providing means.

20

108. A computer-implemented merge user
information providing method in merge user
information providing means, said merge user
25 information providing means comprising plural user

information providing means providing information
regarding a user as subordinate user information
providing means, comprising the steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user
5 registered to said user information providing means
of which use is permitted and the same user
registered to other user information providing means,
without distinguishing said user by whether or not
the use of said user information providing means is
10 permitted; and

providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging.

15

109. A computer-implemented merge user
information providing method in merge user
information providing means, said merge user
20 information providing means comprising plural user
information providing means providing information
regarding a user and ~~a certification~~ an authentication
service regarding said user as subordinate user
information providing means, comprising the steps of:
25 acquiring information regarding a user

registered to said user information providing means
of which use is permitted and/or certification has
been made and the same user registered to other user
information providing means, without distinguishing
5 said user by whether or not the use of said user
information providing means is permitted; and
providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging.

10

110. A computer-implemented merge user
information providing method in merge user
15 information providing means, said merge user
information providing means comprising main user
information providing means and sub user information
providing means providing information regarding a
user and ~~a certification~~ an authentication service
20 regarding said user as subordinate user information
providing means, comprising the steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user
registered to said user information providing means
of which use is permitted and/or certification has
25 been made and the same user registered to other user

information providing means, without distinguishing
said user by whether or not the use of said user
information providing means is permitted; and
providing said acquired information
5 regarding said user with merging.

111. A computer-implemented information
providing method in user information providing means,
said user information providing means providing
10 information regarding a user, comprising the step of:
providing, in response to a request from
merge user information providing means, said merge
user information providing means comprising said user
information providing means and other user
15 information providing means as subordinate
information providing means, information regarding a
user corresponding to distinction information
registered to said user information providing means
and/or other user information providing means for
20 distinguishing said user to said merge user
information providing means.

112. A computer-implemented information providing method in user information providing means, said user information providing means providing information regarding a user and a certification
5 authentication service regarding said user, said method comprising the step of:

providing, in response to a request from merge user information providing means, said merge user information providing means comprising said user
10 information providing means and other user information providing means as subordinate information providing means, information regarding a user corresponding to distinction information registered to said user information providing means
15 and/or other user information providing means for distinguishing said user, to said merge user information providing means.

20

113. A computer-implemented managing method in merge user information providing means, said merge user information providing means comprising plural
25 user information providing means providing

information regarding a user as subordinate user
information providing means, comprising the steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user
registered to said user information providing means
5 of which use is permitted and the same user
registered to other user information providing means,
without distinguishing said user by whether or not
the use of said user information providing means is
permitted;

10 providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging; and

transmitting a request regarding setup of
said subordinate information providing means.

15

114. A computer-implemented managing method
in merge user information providing means, said merge
20 user information providing means comprising plural
user information providing means providing
information regarding a user and a ~~certification~~ an
authentication service regarding said user as
subordinate user information providing means,
25 comprising the steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user
registered to said user information providing means
of which use is permitted and/or certification has
been made and the same user registered to other user
5 information providing means, without distinguishing
said user by whether or not the use of said user
information providing means is permitted;

providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging; and
10 transmitting a request regarding setup of
said subordinate information providing means.

15

115. A computer-implemented managing method
in merge user information providing means, said merge
user information providing means comprising main user
information providing means and sub user information
20 providing means providing information regarding a
user and a ~~certification~~ an authentication service
regarding said user as subordinate user information
providing means, comprising the steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user
25 registered to said user information providing means

of which use is permitted and/or certification has
been made and the same user registered to other user
information providing means, without distinguishing
said user by whether or not the use of said user
5 information providing means is permitted;
providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging; and
transmitting a request regarding setup of
said subordinate information providing means.

10

116. A processor-readable medium storing a
15 program code for providing merge user information in
merge user information providing means, said merge
user information providing means comprising plural
user information providing means providing
information regarding a user as subordinate user
20 information providing means, comprising the steps of:
acquiring information regarding a user
registered to said user information providing means
of which use is permitted and the same user
registered to other user information providing means,
25 without distinguishing said user by whether or not

the use of said user information providing means is permitted; and

providing said acquired information regarding said user with merging.

5

117. A processor-readable medium storing program code for providing merge user information in
10 merge user information providing means, said merge user information providing means comprising plural user information providing means providing information regarding a user and ~~a certification~~ an authentication service regarding said user as
15 subordinate user information providing means, comprising the steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user registered to said user information providing means of which use is permitted and/or certification has
20 been made and the same user registered to other user information providing means, without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information providing means is permitted; and
providing said acquired information
25 regarding said user with merging.

5 118. A processor-readable medium for
providing merge user information in merge user
information providing means, said merge user
information providing means comprising main user
information providing means and sub user information
10 providing means providing information regarding a
user and ~~a certification~~ an authentication service
regarding said user as subordinate user information
providing means, comprising the steps of:
 acquiring information regarding a user
15 registered to said user information providing means
of which use is permitted and/or certification has
been made and the same user registered to other user
information providing means, without distinguishing
said user by whether or not the use of said user
20 information providing means is permitted; and
 providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging.

119. A processor-readable medium for
providing information in user information providing
means, said user information providing means
5 providing information regarding a user, comprising
the step of:

providing, in response to a request from
merge user information providing means, said merge
user information providing means comprising said user
10 information providing means and other user
information providing means as subordinate
information providing means, information regarding a
user corresponding to distinction information
registered to said user information providing means
15 and/or other user information providing means for
distinguishing said user to said merge user
information providing means.

20

120. A processor-readable medium storing
program code for providing information in user
information providing means, said user information
25 providing means providing information regarding a

user and a ~~certification~~ authentication service
regarding said user, said method comprising the step
of:

providing, in response to a request from
5 merge user information providing means, said merge
user information providing means comprising said user
information providing means and other user
information providing means as subordinate
information providing means, information regarding a
10 user corresponding to distinction information
registered to said user information providing means
and/or other user information providing means for
distinguishing said user, to said merge user
information providing means.

15

121. A processor-readable medium for
20 managing in merge user information providing means,
said merge user information providing means
comprising plural user information providing means
providing information regarding a user as subordinate
user information providing means, comprising the
25 steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user
registered to said user information providing means
of which use is permitted and the same user
registered to other user information providing means,
5 without distinguishing said user by whether or not
the use of said user information providing means is
permitted;

providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging; and
10 transmitting a request regarding setup of
said subordinate information providing means.

15

122. A processor-readable medium for
managing in merge user information providing means,
said merge user information providing means
comprising plural user information providing means
20 providing information regarding a user and a—
~~certification~~an authentication service regarding said
user as subordinate user information providing means,
comprising the steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user
25 registered to said user information providing means

of which use is permitted and/or certification has
been made and the same user registered to other user
information providing means, without distinguishing
said user by whether or not the use of said user
5 information providing means is permitted;

providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging; and

transmitting a request regarding setup of
said subordinate information providing means.

10 123. A processor-readable medium for
managing method merge user information providing
means, said merge user information providing means
comprising main user information providing means and
sub user information providing means providing
15 information regarding a user and ~~a certification~~ an
authentication service regarding said user as
subordinate user information providing means,
comprising the steps of:

acquiring information regarding a user
20 registered to said user information providing means
of which use is permitted and/or certification has
been made and the same user registered to other user
information providing means, without distinguishing
said user by whether or not the use of said user
25 information providing means is permitted;

providing said acquired information
regarding said user with merging; and
transmitting a request regarding setup of
said subordinate information providing means.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A merge information providing apparatus has a merge user information providing function, the merge user information providing function includes
5 plural user information providing functions providing information regarding a user as subordinate user information providing functions, wherein the merge information providing apparatus acquires the information regarding the user from the user
10 information providing function and provides the acquired information regarding the user with merging.